Theatrical - 1926
Individual Troupes, etc.,

J. A. JACKSON'S THEATRICAL PAGE

News of Theatres, Parks, Fairs, The Deacons Club and Allied Amusements

T. O. B. A. Annual Meeting Starts New Era For Negro Theatricals

Washington Tribune
2-5-26

ORGANIZATION MORE COMPACT, HENCE MORE CONSTRUCTIVE WORK DONE THAN EVER BEFORE

S. H. DUDLEY ACCORDED UNUSUAL DISTINCTION OF RECEIVING EVERY VOTE CAST FOR RE-ELECTION AS DIRECTOR

FULL RECOGNITION ACCORDED ACTORS UNION

TRIBUNE COVERS SESSION AND BECOMES OFFICAL ORGAN OF CIRCUIT

ACTORS DAY ESTABLISHED

By J. A. Jackson

Chattanooga, Tenn., Jan. 30.—The Bi-Annual session of the stockholders of the Theaters Owners Booking Association, and the regular semi-annual meeting of the Directors of the almost nation wide organization that dominates the Negro theatricals of the country is over. So are several special conferences that were incident to the big gathering; and that were of as much consequence to the colored performers as were the larger meetings. The body is composed of the most composite group of men that could be assembled for any purpose. Their one point of common interest being the betterment of shows and conditions in the special field in which each hold heavy investments. After sixteen years of effort on the part of far seeing men, this circuit in its sixth year presents the show world with a well defined organization.

The stockholders' meeting was a harmonious one, and they exhibited an unusual candor in inviting the Representative of the Colored Actors Union and the Washington Tribune, official organ of the performers to sit with them thru the entire session. Nothing was concealed from the profession and the public both of whom the officials regarded as having a moral right to a complete knowledge of the problems that confront the organization.

The Stockholders present were:

S. H. Dudley, 1223 7th St., N. W. Washington, D. C.; John B. Bruner, Roosevelt Theatre, Cincinnati, Ohio; A. Barrasso, Palace Theatre, Memphis, Tennessee; C.H. Douglass, Douglass Theatre, Macon, Gerogia; H. J. Hury, Frolic Theatre, Birmingham, Alamaba; Martin Klein, 3621 S State Street, Chicago, Illinois.

Charles H. Turpin, Booker Washington Theatre, St. Louis, Missouri; Milton Starr, Bijou Theatre, Nashville, Tenn.; Morris Boudreaux, Lyric Theatre, New Orleans, La.; Charles P. Bailey, 81 Decatur Street, Atlanta, Ga.; E. L. Cummings, 29 West Wright Street, Pensacola, Florida; Dr. J. A. C. Lattimore, Lincoln Theatre, Louisville, Ky.; E. S. Stone, Washington, Theatre, Indianapolis, Ind., Samuel E. Reevin, 1212 Volunteer Building, Chattanooga, Tenn.

The following were represented by proxy:

Chintz Moore, Ella Moore Theatre, Dallas, Texas.; L. T. Lester, Rivoli Theatre, Columbia, S. C.; Charles A. Somma, Hipprodome Theatre, Richmond, Va.; H. B. Miller, Grand Theatre, Chicago, Illinios; W. S. Scales, LaFayette , Theatre, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Stockholders

At the conclusion of receiving and giving consideration to the reports of officials, the stockholders elected the following boaord of directors to serve for the next two years.

S. H. Dudley, Washington, D. C.; John B. Bruner, Cincinnati, Ohio; A. Barrasso, Memphis, Tennessee; H. J. Hury, Birmingham, Alabama; Martin Klein, Chicago, Illinois; Charles H. Turpin, St. Louis, Missouri; Milton Starr, Nashville, Tennessee; Samuel E. Reevin, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Dr. J. A. C. Lattimore, Louisville, Ky.

It was at this point that the unusual distinction of recieving the total vote cast was accorded to Mr. Dudley. It warmed the heart of a fellow Washingtonian to witness this remarkable expression of confidence and esteem.

The directors at their meeting elected the following officers:

President Milton Starr, Nashville, Tennesee; Vice-President Charles P. Bailey, Atlanta, Georgia; Manager and Treasure Samuel E. Reevin, Chattanooga, Tenn,; Secretary E. S. Stone, Indianapolis, Ind.

Mr. Bailey in accepting the vice-presidency very definitely removed the possibility of further dissension or the probability of a competitive circuit for he brings into the executive personnel a broad show knowledge, an immense fortune and a big guage set of characteristics.

Lattimore Elected

Dr. J. A. C. Lattimore of Louisville, Ky., who succeeded Mr. Douglass of Macon, Ga, to board membership is another who will bring desirable connections and characteristics to the front. Like Mr. Douglass, he is a colored man of fine spirit and high personal esteem, not only in his home town; but with the country at large.

The racial divisions represented, the volume of wealth involved and the geographical distrubtion of the official family of the T. O. B. A. makes it without doubt the most potent Inter-Racial organization in the country today. It is in nowise philanthropic, is based upon solid economic grounds and its results have effectiveness over a broad territory.

The several thounsand actors who play the houses owned and served under franchise from the circuit will be pleased to read the following extracts from the report of General Manager, Sam E. Reevin:

A Report

"As the Auditors' report, which I am herewith submitting to you shows, we are on a solid financial basis, which, of course, is very gratifying, but more so may we be proud of the wonderful standing of our Corporation and the important place that the T. O. B. A. is holding in the theatrical world. It is called and considered "The Keith of the Colored time," and not only the colored press, but the white press as well recognize us as an important factor and power in the show game.

"If you will permit me, I will use a portion of the statement I made to you in 1924— 'We have no other income, but the 5 per cent that we collect from the performers.'

"In fairness to all concerned, I wish to state this office has not discrimiated, and has been fair to both performers and managers—We have paid the actors 'a living wage, and we have not bled the managers to death, and the three shares each stockholder owns, which certainly is now worth more than par, is a perpetual guarantee and protection for exclusive free franchise for each respective city.

"As the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting held in Cincinnati on July 16ht, 1925, shows, I introduced several resolutions in favor of the Colored Actors' Union, and I urge you gentlemen to not consider the Colored Actors' Union as a rival organization. To my mind this is an important organization and deserves our co-operation and support, and as the manager of the Theatre Owners Booking Association, I deemed it my duty to officially invite the Colored Actors' Union to meet with us here, and although I failed to receive confirmation, I noticed through the press that a representative was elected and will be with us, and lay the Colored Actors' Union claims before us—let us in all sincerity listen to the claims —let us help this needed organization —let us help them, for by helping them we will also help ourselves, for both The Theatre Owners' Booking Association and the Colored Actors' Union have as their goals the uplift and betterment of the Colored theatrical profession."

Actors Day Established

It was shortly after the managers report was adopted that the performers' representative was asked to present the views of the Union. These were cordially received and one request adopted not alone by regular vote, but by immediate detailed pledges from every manager present, speaking for his individual house.

Thus at once an annual Actors' Union Day was made part of the circuit policy, and the receipts from either a midnight ramble or a days performance, as is best suited to local conditions will go toward the purchase and maintainance of a home for aged or infirmed actors who are members of the Union; or for the relief of those ill and distressed.

The other complaints and grievances of the performers were submitted to the consideration of the directors board with the result that full right of jurisdiction of the Union was conceded in the adjustment of grievances between managers with the President of the Union, the General Manager of the circuit with a disinterested party selected by them to settle such matters as they fail to agree upon; a more equitable contract than prevails today; Union right to discipline performers; consecutive routing of the circuit insofar as conditions permit; and extra pro-rata pay for midnight rambles. The details of these arrangements were worked out in a four hour session between the president, booking managers Reevin, Dudley and Klein.

plans to devise form reports of all acts playnig the time so that the circuit officials may at all times be informed as to the components of every act; and the reduction in telegraph costs and mail goes astray will be effected by having acts use hotel and stopping place addresses instead of theatres while on tour.

The handling of the social features of a mixed group of people numbering more than 20 persons in a southern city is at best a difficult one; but manager Reevin who had charge of local arrangements handled the situation excellently.

A Fine Race Hotel

The white members of the body were domiciled at the hotel Patton while the Colored contingent occupied space reserved for them at the Hotel Marten, one of the finest equipped hotels that the writer has ever encountered in the South. It was here that the banquet was held after the stockholders meeting. The dinner which was attended by every member of the organization present was held in the big upstairs lobby of the hotel, and

the service was speedy and correct. It was during this dinner that Charles P. Bailey in a toast said "My money, time and everything else goes to put the T. O. B. A. over."

After the dinner, the group was taken to the Liberty Theatre where four boxes had been held for them by house--owner Silverman. "Chub" Hawkins, manager personally escorted the party to their seats.

A Good Bill

Williams and Brown, Columbia record singers, topped the bill with as fine a dressed singing act as the stage affords today, and the managers applauded the act heartily. Marie Coleman, a graceful Kansas girl, supplements the principals in the act with some remarkable piano playing, both as an accompanist and in a specialty.

Hugh Turner in a knockout single, Wimbush and Jones a mixed team, offering and Rastus and Marie completed as well balanced a bill as we have ever reviewed in a long time.

The Negro members of the party were guests of William (Dusty) Carter at a house party at his home opposite the theatre one night during their stay in the city. He served an elaborate dinner and had the Elks' quartette to sing for the party. This group of singers broadcasts every Monday night from Station WDOD Chattanooga, and readers will favor themselves to hear them. The members are from Amustee Lodge 440 I. B. P. O. E. of W. Ernest Hamilton, first tenor; Fred McCrary, 2nd tenor; Raymond Dorsey, baritone, Bernard E. Vance, basso. There is no gainsaying the fact that the meeting was both a pleasant and profitable one for all of the participants and of great value to those identified with their interests, especially the performers of the Race.

The Deacons

The National secretary has been to Cincinnati, and has interviewed the Grand Master of Ohio, Dr. Frank Hall. The result of the pleasant discussion is to inform Ohio Deacons that until final action has been taken on the matter of St. Mark's Lodge, the Deacons corner in Columbus will continue to function. The Deacons have no part in a purely jurisdictional matter, but as good Masons must recognize the edicts of the Grandmasters of every jurisdiction. Grandmaster Hall will advise us, should occasion rise to interpose. Meanwhile, Deacons will refrain from discussion of the matter, and recognize the natural Masonic authorities. This is a matter for powers higher than ours.

The National Secretary was away from his office during the final week of January, and therefore missed with regret receiving some important High hat callers. Imperial Potentate Caesar R. Blake of the Shriners and Noble Bland, both of Charlotte, N.C., called at the Tribune office in Washington en-route from Boston where they had represented the Order at the bier of Grand Master Isaac Roberts who was buried during the week.

Missed also, I. G. Wilson, 33 degree and Editor George Harris of New York who were visiting the city in the interests of the Masonic Centenniel in that city this spring. Wilson is one of the four original honorary Deacons whose work in the Imperial council made the performers Prince Hall organization possible. Harris, of course, ought to be a Deacon. He is the right sort for it.

Get ready for Boston. Your secretary has just received word from Senior Deacon Pickett of New Haven to the effect that he is getting matters lined up in New England so that we may "Preach and Parade" in Boston the week of August 23-27.

Another letter in the same mail came from Sandy Trice of Chicago, Chairman of the Transportation committee of the A. E. A. N. M. S., and a good Deacon. It contained three transportation orders for the trip. Deacons desiring to be among those present at the BIG MEET, will send in for these orders and we will obtain them through Noble Trice. That is if you are not going with some other branch of the Order.

The Ebony Follies, Dudley's New Show

A Fast Stepping Show with Good Principals

By D. L. Wycks

The above show started rehearsal February 1st, under the general supervision of S. H. Dudley, the most widely known and oldest Race Producer in show business.

S. H. Jr., is to stage the show, Lonnie Fisher is principal comedian. Miss Ozie McPherson will be one of the Follies' features and a number of others that are coming to the front. The show will be well equipped with special scenery and wardrobe par excellent.

Mr. Kilroy, (white), one of the oldtime producers and managers of the old Stair and Havaland days, will manage the company and is part owner. The show is being booked by both Mr. Kilroy and S. H. Dudley.

While the writer was in Dudley's office in Washington trying to get the facts as to why Dudley was putting out the show and where he intended to play it, Dudley's answer was right to the point; it was this; I want to see if the Colored people will support a Ziegfeld Follies, if not; "I will play it to the white audiences, booking it through Klaw and Erlangers Offices with a few changes, I also have a letter or several letters from Gus Hill who wants to become interested and put it on the Columbia Burlesque Wheel, that is; if the show hits, if it fails; then it is up to me to make it a hit.

"I have watched the amusement seekers very closely and I have observed that the oldtime entertainment that put Colored Shows on the map would not please the present generation, they do not want plot, they simply want fast and humorous jazz, Charleston and then some more Jazz and Charleston and when they don't see that they want to be laughing, so I am building the Ebony Follies along these lines with other features that will make an entertainment worth while.

"I hope the show will come up to the expectation of the critics and the public, but you can rest assured that it will be well equipped in every way and run on the same order of the biggest attractions playing the larger circuits."

The writer feels safe in saying that Mr. Dudley heads the Colored Showmen, in fact he is in a class by himself and from the material that I have seen I feel justified in saying that the Ebony Follies will be a decided hit.

LARKINS PRODUCTION DELAYED ACCOUNT OF STAR'S ILLNESS

Owing to a severe attack of bronchitis, Jolly John Larkins is confined to his home, which will necessitate setting back the commencement of rehearsals of his new musical comedy "Oh Mammy," and its opening date which was set for February 22.

OHIO MASONS MAKE GALA DAY ON JANUARY 26

Tuesday Jan. 26, was a day of considerable consequence to the Masons of Cincinnati. It was signalized by two functions. The Scottish Rite consistory, had Sumner R. Furnes Sov. Gr. Com. of the Northern Jurisdiction as their guests at a reception in their Cathedral.

On the same evening, Ike Paul, Senior Deacon of the Corner gathered the Deacons of the Community together for one of those spreads that have made the rivals in the Ohio corners a name to be conjured with wherever Deacons assemble. The affair was given in honor of National Secretary, J. A. Jackson who had the misfortune not to have been advised of the surprise until after he had made engagements for business conference on a train that would oblige his leaving the city at 8 p. m. It was impossible to break the plan as reservations had been made, and confrees from Chicago and Indianapolis were already en route. Thus the honor guest was obliged to miss his treat.

The Deacons were fortunate in having with them Grandmaster Frank during the evening, and may it be said, he can make up for the absence of any number of people in Masonic gatherings.

PAUL ROBESON TOPS BIG BILL AT ATTUCKS

Paul Robeson, World's greatest Negro actor in "Body and Soul", tops the week's big bill at the Attucks Theatre Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Not since "Over the Hill to the Poor House," has there been filmed a picture that touches the heart strings with as great a force as "Body and Soul," the new Micheaux photo-production. The story is of a good but helpless girl in the toils of a hypocritical beast. The story is jammed with action, love and suspense, it is one of those pictures of the simple life and of the lowly, but faithful Negro which the world has heard much, but is in no position to know much about. The settings are in the Great America Black, Belt of which a story is evolved around that has held audiences spell bound.

With Paul Robeson as the leading star, supported by an all-star cast, "Body and Soul" is a drama of intense interest.

BERT WILLIAMS' CONTRACT

New York.—The original contract that the famous Bert Williams signed in 1913 for a $2,000 per week salary was, according to a report in Variety, recently presented to Harry Pierce, theatrical agent of this city, by Will Vodery.

The contract was issued for the Hammerstein Victoria theater and Paradise roof garden by the Hammerstein Amusement company and signed by Bert Williams Dec. 11, 1913, to cover an engagement starting Jan. 26, 1914, at $2,000 per week salary.

New Colored Film

PHILADELPHIA.—The new Colored Players Film Corporation has released "[illegible] His Race." Harry Henderson, Shingzie Howard, William Clayton, Ethel Smith, William Smith, and Lawrence Chenault are the principals. The picture was produced in Philadelphia and vicinity.

NEW YORK CITY GRAPHIC
MAY 19, 1926

PLAY BY A NEGRO

HOLLYWOOD, CAL., May 1[illegible]
Garland Anderson, negro playwright, arrived here today with the manuscript of his play, "Appearances." It is understood a film company has opened negotiations for scenario rights.

N. Y. EVENING WORLD
MAY 1, 1926

A LITTLE NEGRO THEATRE

What is called a Little Negro Theatre has been established in Harlem. It is intended primarily to be a centre where Negro actors can interpret Negro life before Negro audiences. The stage to be used is that of the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library. The first bill, which will be acted May 3, 10 and 17, is made up of "Compromise," by Willis Richardson; "The Church Fight," by Ruth A. Gaines-Shelton, and "The Broken Banjo," by Willis Richardson.

Shubert Engages Miller and Lyles

Miller and Lyles, authors, producers and chief actors of "Shuffle Along" and "Runnin' Wild," have been engaged by Messrs. Shubert for the forthcoming spectacular revue "The Great [illegible]."

Miller and Lyles have played together for twenty-one years, since the days when they were studying at Fisk university, Nashville, Tenn., the one for the Episcopalian ministry, the other for a career as an instrumental musician. At a university athletic meet they appeared on the field, however with a clown act. They then and there selected their careers.

Theatrical - 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

Gilpin To Star In Uncle Tom's Cabin

NEW YORK, July 18.—"It appears certain now," said Tuesday's New York World, "that Charles Gilpin, Negro actor, who starred in 'The Emperor Jones,' will play Uncle Tom in Universal's screen version of 'Uncle Tom's Cabin.' Contracts are to be signed this week and Mr. Gilpin will start to Universal City, Calif., within a fortnight."

Mr. Gilpin is no stranger to American theatregoers. His work in "The Emperor Jones" labeled him as one of the outstanding actors of the world while his work in "All God's Chillun Got Wings" was none the less praiseworthy. In this his latest effort Gilpin is a long shot to take the movie colony by storm. The world awaits the result of his effort.

DABNEY WRITES FROM LONDON TELLS OF STAGE

Afro Correspondent With U. S. Student Delegation Enroute To Russia

FINDS ALL RACES IN THE METROPOLIS

Work Is Scarce Except In Theatres Where Dancers Make Money

LONDON, ENGLAND—(Special Enroute to Russia) London is a city of all races.

One meets people from every country in the world. Some of these people, of course, are only travelers with no particular aim in view. Such travelers are driven by the urge to see London and other cities of the world. I have often thought that scholars and writers minimize this factor in world migration. Just as some restless youngsters in Mississippi, Georgia, and other Southern States go North to see New York and Atlantic City or West to see Chicago and Detroit so many of these migrants from Canada, America, Australia, China, Japan, Mexico, India, West Indies and other countries come here to see London.

Traveling is expensive so most of these people naturally either work their way to England or come with a group of musicians or a theatrical troupe. Sometimes colored travelers come to London with a circus. During my trip across to Liverpool every European passenger with whom I talked told me that the first time he saw a colored man he was with a circus.

Since my arrival in London I have found that colored people can get little work outside of menial jobs in restaurants and hotels. On the other hand, good colored singers, comedians, dancers and musicians can get a plenty to do, not only in London but practically in all of the large European cities.

One of the most interesting colored men that I have met since my arrival in London came to London from Cincinnati in 1878 with a troupe in a play entitled "Uncle Tom's Cabin." "Uncle Tom's Cabin." was a great success in London. The colored man with the theatrical troupe introduced himself to me as Morris C. Gaines, son of Mr. John I. Gaines, the founder of the colored schools of Cincinnati, Ohio.

As an indication of what colored musicians, comedians and theatre actors can do in Europe, I could do not better than give a short sketch of the career of Mr. Morris C. Gaines. Mr. Gaines spent two weeks in London with "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Then he went with the troupe to Breslau, Germany, where the performance was put on fifteen days. After this, a month was spent in Berlin. The troupe then spent four weeks in Vienna, Austria. Following the visit to Vienna, the troupe went to Pressburg, Hungary, for two weeks; to Budapetst for a month and then returned to Pressburg, Vienna and London.

Afterr eturning to London, Mr. Gaines left the troupe and joined a friend named William Thompson. The two traveled thereafter together visiting various cities of Europe giving clog dances and songs. Gaines and Thompson spent one year first in London where they had complete success. Then they traveled in France and Germany appearing in theatres in Paris and Berlin. Mr. Gaines has traveled in Norway, Sweden, Spain, Portugal, Russia, France, Germany and other countries of Europe, even going to Finland. The only child which Mr. Gaines has, Morris Gaines, Jr., is now on the stage in Australia.

In all of Mr. Gaines' travels in Europe he says that the chief exhibition of race feeling has cropped out on the question of the intermarriage of races. Race prejudice does not exist in Europe as it does in America, but there is considerable opposition to interracial marriage.

Next time I shall write something about other colored men who are on the stage in London and a word about colored students.

Is the Negro Actor Coming Into His Own?

--- by ---

J. A. ROGERS

THAT which is despised today not infrequently becomes the rage of tomorrow. History is full of instances of the rejected stone becoming the head of the corner. Coal, on which our civilization marches, was at one time considered less valuable than stone, because wood was plentiful; sixty years ago oil running on one's land was considered a nuisance; during the time of Dickens and Harriett Martineau the United States was the butt of Europe's jokes. When Thomas Jefferson was president he offered a plot of ground in Washington free to any foreign government who would build an embassy on it, but so little was the young republic, now the most powerful and richest of nations, thought of, that no one accepted. Again and again, the despisers, like the sisters of Cinderella, have found history against them.

That the above is becoming increasingly true of the Negro is a commonplace. What we are going to discuss, rather, is the Negro in the dramatic field.

For some time now the Negro has been on the stage. But how? Almost wholly as the man with the cap and bells. His mission is that of clown—to entertain with jest, and grimace, and play of feet—although the clown is usually the most human and nimble-witted one in the circus.

Bert Williams, and many other serious-minded Negroes, found themselves hemmed in this narrow pale, because the white man, tired of himself, and of his own people, wanted someone to make him laugh. The Negro could, and because he could he found himself stratified in the job, no matter what his aspirations or capabilities.

Today that hasn't changed much. Once become identified with a certain role, and it sticks to you like the shirt of Nessus.

(Protected by the K. N. F. Service)

The Negro jazz artist and entertainer is certainly an improvement on what was expected of his predecessor fifteen years ago. The idea of what the Negro is supposed to be has been slowly changing in the white man's mind.

And who is responsible for the change? Largely Negroes themselves. Charles Gilpin, in the "Emperor Jones," little as such a play was truthful to Negro life, created an epoch in a night. Then came Evelyn Preer and others with "Salome," which little as the public, white and black, was ready for it, showed again that human beings, even though having tinted skins, were capable of interpreting the subtle nuances of emotion. Paul Robeson in "All God's Chillun," kept the pot simmering, much also as that play again misrepresented the real truth.

The latest of these is "Lulu Belle," an almost wholly artificial thing, but which also may be regarded as a step toward better things. Interest, once aroused, is like a fire; it is difficult to tell where it will stop.

Truth is triumphant. What is done in secret will some day be proclaimed from the house-tops. This is a natural law. The public is more and more demanding the truth about the Negro, and some day the full story will be told with the Negro himself the teller of it.

A few weeks ago in a Broadway theatre appeared a play called "Beyond Evil," written by David Thorne, a white man. It portrayed in part the story of a white woman who mortgaged her husband's property to came to Harlem to look up a Negro, knocking at his door, on the pretense of looking for someone else. She becomes his Lulu Belle for a month, but when the Negro learns of the rotten deal she has given the husband it leads to a quarrel and parting. Of course the play lasted but one night. The papers declared that New York had never before witnessed such a tempestuous premiere. Most of the audience hissed, but a goodly part cheered.

I cite this as proof of the increasing attempt to get at the truth. Hitherto the lyncher has been able to get the forces of democracy and Christianity lined

up almost wholly on his side because of his lies that all seeking of this sort was on one side.

The Negro in Europe with a favorable field, has already come into his own. While slavery was raging here Ira Aldridge was being the most famous of Othellos, and with white casts. In Paris, Benglia plays along with white actors the difficult role of Mephistopheles, in a sketch at the Folies-Bergere. And there are other instances.

But in America the Negro will have to create his own opportunity. And how? By getting ready. Working toward a goal is the only step toward its realization. Negroes will have to begin writing their plays and training themselves, no matter how poor the prospect may be, such as is now being done by the Krigwa Little Negro Theatre. Then and not till then will the potential Booths, Mantells and Aldridges within the group come into their own. We must aim at something higher than merely getting applause and money for dancing and making others laugh, fine as that is, for the peculiar fact is, that while we love the man who makes us laugh, we both love and respect the man who touches the profounder depths of our being, as is done in the drama.

The mind of the white race, like an over-tilled field, is losing its vigor and spontaneity, and it is ridiculous and contrary to history to assume that the Negro's vast mind of psychologic wealth will be permitted to go much longer unused.

The Theater

The Souls of Black Folk

By THEOPHILUS LEWIS

SURVEY OF THE NEGRO: No. II.

Its Economic Weakness

Even an extremely conservative estimate of the amount of money Negroes spend on the theater presents a surprisingly large figure. In New York alone the two theatres which give vaudeville and musical shows collect admission fees amounting to at least $1,000 a day. The admissions paid to the five moving picture theaters in the district amount to no less than $1,000 more. An extremely cautious estimate would put the amount spent on the theater in Harlem alone at $600,000 a year, enormously more than all the Negroes in America spend on any other spiritual vehicle except the church.

According to J. A. Jackson, the leading statistical authority on the colored stage, there were in 1925 four hundred and twenty-five theaters devoted to the patronage of colored audiences. If the average annual receipts of these theaters amount to $10,000 the yearly total is over $4,000,000. This, of course, is an extremely low estimate, and it would doubtless be closer to the facts to say that four cities—Harlem, Chicago, Detroit and Philadelphia spend that amount for amusement.

It would appear that an institution able to sell itself with such conspicuous success would quickly become prosperous enough to spend a part of its earnings making experiments in the direction of improving the quality of its offerings. For the stage itself must ever be the active agent in raising the public taste. The public, or any important part of it, knows well enough when it is dissatisfied with what is being shown in the theater; but it never knows in advance what kind or quality of amusement will suit its taste. Time and again in the history of the American Theater, both black and white, there have been attempts on the part of managers to give some disgruntled part of the public precisely the kind of amusement it had demanded. These efforts to please the public by giving it what it had said it wanted have uniformly ended in failure. A striking illustration, and one close to home, is furnished by the several failures to win the appreciation of better class Negro audiences by giving them the sort of sedate performances they had seen on the white stage and which they said they wanted to see on the colored stage. Plans for raising the general standard of amusement by appealing to the higher as well as the lower elements of the public succeed best when they originate behind the footlights. Not that the theater is infallible in adjusting its offerings to its public; rather, it proceeds by an ardurous trial and error method, varying the type and quality of its entertainment and carrying on its experiments at a loss until it finally wins a response from the part of the public it is aiming to please.

This response cannot always be measured in the form of profits. The higher minded individuals of a community are always outnumbered by the lower elements and the type of diversion they require costs more to produce than the low amusement the multitude is satisfied with. In striving to please the better part of the public the theater must be prepared to supply a limited market with an expensive form of entertainment. Which means, in more definite terms, that the higher forms of theatrical recreation must be produced with the expectancy of small profits or even a dead loss. In a theater which is economically sound and spiritually vigorous these expensive but unprofitable productions are undertaken as a contribution to the community culture. The white American theater is commercial to the core, still a part of the gains produced by the more vulgar forms of amusement is continually being reinvested in the production of the higher forms and the result is that the stage is constantly becoming richer while the popular taste is gradually being improved.

This adjustment of the prosperity of the stage to the cultural needs of the community is usually undertaken in response to the spur of competition. It is voluntarily attempted only when there is a bond of spiritual kinship existing between the public the theater serves and the persons in control of its finances. The Negro theater is not subject to either of these favorable influences. While prosperous enough when the collections at the door are considered, it is organized in such a way that neither its public nor its performers can obtain the full advantages of its prosperity.

White Landlords and Producers

More than half of the theaters operated for colored patronage, says J. A. Jackson, are owned by white capital. Mr. Jackson's figures are by no means exhaustive and they leave us in doubt as to the relative values of the holdings of white and colored owners. Nor do his figures shed any light on how the amount of business done by either group compares with the amount done by the other group. But as the white owners generally control the larger houses, as well as the ones longest established and most conveniently located in centers where theater-going is a community habit, there cannot be much error in claiming that their control of fifty per cent of the theaters gives white owners seventy-five per cent of the business.

This foreign financial control of our theater would be undesirable even if those exercising it were persons of higher than average culture, which is not the case. Almost without exception, the white owners of theaters devoted to colored patronage are people who, if they were connected with the white American theater, would be found among its camp followers rather than working in the theater proper; cheap vaudeville entrepreneurs at best, at bottom sandwich venders and amusement park fakirs. They have no knowledge of the true nature of the theater, and even if we concede their willingness to adjust the stage they control to the finer feelings of the public they serve their limitations stand between their good intentions and success. Out of touch with the refinement of their own race, they cannot be expected to meet with much success when they attempt to gauge the more delicate sentiments of a people whose ways are strange to them. When they see a part of the Negro public pleased with the theater when it combines the most garish features of a nickelodeon and a burlesque show they are easily convinced that there is no strong desire among Negroes for any higher quality of amusement.

Most of the colored owners are men of the same low calibre as the white owners. But they are at least privy to the idiomatic aspirations of the race and subject to its social discipline. If they were in control of the bulk of the income produced by the perennial prosperity of the Negro theater they would be moved, or they could be urged, to devote a part of their profits to bringing the stage up to the standard demanded by the better element of the race. But the small share of the business in the hands of colored owners does not produce balances large enough to absorb the inevitable losses which would have to be faced during the transition from a low to a higher quality of entertainment. Indeed, as a rule the reserves of colored owners are so slight that frequently a single month of slack business will force a proprietor to close his doors. With such a precarious hold on a bare existence in business colored owners cannot assume the expense of even such piffling experiments white proprietors sometimes underwrite.

The white owners, to the limits of their low vision, are usually sympathetic enough and quite willing to accede to any demand of the public which strikes them as reasonable. Their idea of a reasonable innovation, however, is one that promises quick and substantial profits. They hardly ever object to putting colored cashiers in the ticket booths and colored flunkeys on the door because it means a saving in salaries and favorable comment in Negro newspapers. They will permit chorus girls to take off more clothes than the law allows because it means increased patronage of the poolroom rats and sex starved stevedores who cannot afford to visit the buffet flats as often as they wish. They will occasionally go the limit outfitting a combination burlesque and minstrel show, presenting the hybrid product as a "revue," because that also fetches the crowd and b[illegible]

rings in ready money right away. But they cannot be persuaded to assist in keeping the stage abreast of the cultural progress of the race unless they can be shown where it will pay from the first performance.

Only slightly less pernicious than the domination of the white owner-manager is the influence of the white producer. The white producer, however, is not at all concerned about the desires of the Negro public. His potential audience is the large number of white people who would like to enjoy the thrills of the black and tan cabarets, only they can't afford the stiff cover charge and don't like the idea of paying fifty cents for a bottle of beer they can buy for eight cents at the delicatessen store. Then there are the old timers who yearn for amusement reminiscent of the days of Lew Dockstader and the Primrose Minstrels. These two classes, when they are in the mood for theatrical slumming, will be satisfied with any show consisting of twenty odd yellow dancing girls topped off with a few low comedians and their feeders.

Assembling a show for the diversion of white audiences is in itself innocuous enough, but, indirectly, it exerts an unwholesome influence on the Negro theater. The white producer prefers to select his headliners from the ranks of colored performers who have made good on the white vaudeville stage. He pays higher salaries than the colored actor can earn playing before Negro audiences, and if the show enjoys a moderately successful run the members of the cast subsequently find it easier to get bookings on the white vaudeville stage as well as from the managers catering to colored audiences. This condition makes a prominent part in a show assembled for white audiences the goal of the colored actor's ambition. Naturally, only the more talented performers can make the grade. [illegible] spend their best years developing themselves for a career under a white producer.

Theatrical— 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

PLAIN-DEALER
CLEVELAND, O.
NOV 14 1926

Gilpin Players Lead in W/Negro Dramatic Field

BY GRACE V. KELLY.

PLAY HOUSE SETTLEMENT, at 2339 E. 38th street, is the proud possessor of a dramatic club of such a high quality that its influence is spreading in the healthiest possible manner.

This dramatic club is known as the Gilpin Players, because Charles Gilpin, of "Emperor Jones" fame came to see them about five years ago, and went through a rehearsal and encouraged them in every way. The club was about a year old at the time and it was named the Dumas Players, but this name was promptly changed to the Gilpin Players, gratitude being an outstanding characteristic of the Negro race.

At first there was much dramatic interest, but taste and understanding had to be developed, not only in the players but in the audiences. They've all come along splendidly, and the quality of their work is higher and higher.

Russell and Rowena Jalliffe have charge of the dramatics, as well as all other of the settlement activities. They've been in Cleveland for eleven years, and were trained for their work in the Chicago School of Civics and Philanthropy. They had courses in race problems and courses in the drama.

Besides the play grounds a group of cottages are spattered all over several lots and they have their home in one of these. This home is charming, and calls back to my memory the home of Raymond and Ida O'Neill, farther out Cedar, when Raymond was the director of the Play House.

* * *

The Play House and the Playhouse settlement sound so much alike that it seems necessary to explain that they are two different institutions, but that the Play House holds out a helping hand, whenever it's needed, to this, as well as to all other sincere dramatic groups, in Cleveland. The Playhouse settlement has taken over an old store, on Central avenue, and is turning it into a little theater. This was the signal of the Play House to come forward, in the person of Max Eisenstat, who is helping them with their mechanical problems, lighting and the like.

This spirit shows itself all through the dramatic activities in Cleveland. The art is the thing, and not this or that little group. Even individuals sink any personal vanity they may have in order that the art may be greater.

A fine example of this occurred when Louis Jones and Luther King were asked to do Negro spirituals at the Art museum. Mr. Jones, who is recently back from Europe, and is a splendid violin player, insisted on subordinating his playing to Mr. King's singing so that the art of the Negro spiritual might be given in the most acceptable manner. Last night, at Mount Zion Temple, Mr. Jones gave a violin program, in which his own art had its innings.

* * *

The Gilpin Players give many one-act plays during the year, but they always manage one thre-act play. Their high spot, so far, was the presentation of Paul Green's "No 'Count Boy" at the Cleveland Museum of Art, before the National Conference of Settlements.

The Dallas (Tex.) Players won the Belasco cup with this play in 1925, in an international contest of Little theaters.

* * *

A thing that seems to assure the success of the Gilpin Players, is the beautiful generosity displayed among the actors. They rejoice in each other's successes and step aside to give each other good parts. So far, nobody seems to have lost by this generosity.

The first production of the season, will be on the evening of Nov. 19. Three one-act plays will be given, Eugene O'Neill's "Dreamy Kid," George Kelly's "The Flattering Word," and Howard Brock's "Bank Account."

In talking over the little theater movement, Mrs. Jalliffe remarked that its great benefit to the community lies in the fact that it is a great emotional outlet, and does much to take the drabness out of life. My own evil mind went on to consider that the tired business man is less apt to flirt with his stenographer, if he has something else to amuse him. There's nothing like an avocation, and the one selected is invariably in line with one's natural gifts. Mistakes are often made in picking a vocation, but seldom in picking an avocation.

NEW YORK CITY TELEGRAPH
MAY 5, 1926.

CRUCIFIXION.

A group of youthful negro thespians in Atlantic City went in for realism and organized their own little theatre movement—for the time being. With vauntless ambition they essayed to stage the Passion Play. All went well until the crucifixion scene was reached. The dusky youngster selected to portray the Christus, was carefully draped on an improvised crucifix made of old boards. When one of the "mob" proceeded to drive a nail through his hand, he howled, and broke up the Passion Play.

"Blue-nosed reformers have long sought to crucify the perennial Broadway "passion" plays, and the producers have howled, not with pain but with delight, for to them the sputterings and fumings of the moral uplifters mean more golden sheckels. When the agitators stampede the producer wipes the dust off the S. R. O. sign.

Julius Bledsoe in First Straight Acting Part at the Provincetown

Rose McClendon, Abbie Mitchell and Frank Wilson Among Other Well Known Players in the Cast

American Mercury
12-29-26

"In Abraham's Bosom," by Paul Green, whose "Six Plays for the Negro Theatre," were so well received throughout the country, will open at the Privincetown Playhouse tonight, Tuesday, December 28. Unusual interest attends this opening, for many reasons.

The Provincetown Playhouse, as all who have followed the history of the American theatre during the last decade know, has always been dedicated to the discovery and development of new playwrights. Before it was so hard to find new plays by new playwrights this orgnaization called itself "The Playwright's Theatre." Its great achievement has been the development of Eugene O'Neill, whose plays were first acted on Macdougal street, whose talents were fostered there and allowed to blossom through freedom to experiment.

Paul Green, still a young man, is professor of philosophy at the University of North Carolina. His one act plays have been familiar and popular with the little theatres of the country. The famous Belasco Cup was won last season by the Dallas Players in the Little Theatre Tournament with Mr. Green's one act play "No 'Count Boy." Six of his one act plays were recently published under the title "Lonesome Road," and met with the same enthusiastic reviews in print that they had received on the stage.

"In Abraham's Bosom" is Mr. Green's first full length play, and his first to receive a professional production. The Provincetown Playhouse feels proudly that it is coming back to its heritage as "The Playwright's Theatre." Mr. Green's plays deal with a type of Negro with which he is familiar, the Southern tenant farmer, insufferably poor, ignorant and shiftless. Mr. Green in his introduction to the printed one act plays characterizes him as follows:

"He bears the brunt of the world's dirty word. For more than a hundred years he has built roads, leveled hills, and forests, plowed the fields, sweated and groaned forth the great brag crops of naval stores, of cotton, tobacco and corn, with little or no reward, material or otherwise. Living in the vilest of huts, the prey of his own superstitions, suspicions and practices, beaten and forlorn before God Almighty Himself—he has struggled helplessly in the clutch of affliction and pain. He has perished by thousands in the long servitude of the white master. Unceasingly he has matched his strength with the earth that bore him, going in the end to rot unnoticed in the land he tilled."

Depicting the hero, if one may call him so, of "In Abraham's Bosom" is Julius Bledsoe, Negro baritone, who is ranked with Roland Hayes and Paul Robeson as one of the noted singers of his race. Mr. Bledsoe was born in Waco, Texas, and after being educated at Bishop College, Texas, and serving in the war, he came to New York to study medicine at Columbia University. Since earliest boyhood he had shown a talent for singing, and finally gave up his intended medical career for the concert stage. He has achieved much distinction, singing in French, German, Spanish and Russian as well as in English. Mr. Bledsoe sang in "Deep River," the interesting but short lived Harling-Stalling opera. This will be his first straight acting part.

The Provincetown Playhouse has been instrumental in bringing before the white public two other Negro actors, Paul Robeson, who played "All God's Chillun Got Wings," and in the second production of "Emperor Jones" and who was lately starred on Broadway in "Black Boy," and Charles Gilpin, who played in the first presentation of "Emporer Jones." It is anticipated that Julius Bledsoe may well follow in the footsteps of these two men.

Rose McClendon, who achieved such remarkable distinction in "Deep River" in the famous scene where she walked down the staircase, will play Goldie, Abraham's wife, and Abbie Mitchell, well known in Harlem as leading lady with the Lafayette Stock company, will portray 'Muh Mack,' Abraham's mother. Frank Wilson, already an old-timer at the Provincetown, H. Ben Smith, James Dunmore, Thomas Mosher, Melvin Greene and Stanley Greene are the other members of a well chosen cast. L. Rufus Hill, who plays the Colonel, and H. Ben Smith portraying Lonnie, his son, are the only white people in the cast.

"In Abraham's Bosom" is directed by Jaspeh Deeter, long assocrated with the Province Playhouse. In addition to his work in the past as director and actor at the Provincetown, Mr. Deeter organized his own theatre in Rose Valley, Pennsylvania, the Hedgerow Theatre, which he calls the first repertory theatre of this generation. Here he directed thirty-three plays ,a g oodly record. Cleon Throckmorton, well known stage designer, also a product of Provincetown, has furnished the settings.

This will be the fourth Negro play to be presented at the Provincetown Playhouse, the other three being "Emperor Jones," "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and "The Dreamy Kid," all three by Eugene O'Neill.

WEEK'S BEST EDITORIAL

THE SEQUEL TO "LULU BELLE"

(From Philadelphia Public Journal)

When David Belasco startled the thatrical world by including in his cast of "Lulu Belle" some eighty colored players to do mostly minor parts, many papers among the colored press hailed the event as a welcome innovation and acclaimed Belasco's act as the opening wedge to a breaking down of the color bar against Negro art. We confess that we did not share their optimism—fearing that the great producer was using them more in the pursuit of burlesque rather than real art. In "Deep River," the jazz opera, now the talk of Broadway, about ten Negroes are filling very capable parts; and the tributes of highest praise are not only showered upon him by the best metropolitan musical and theatrical critics, but Alexander Woolcott, noted critic of the New York World, pays this—perhaps the most remarkable tribute ever paid to a colored woman in the history of the stage. Here is his eloquent tribute:

"In the third act of "Deep River" when, for a moment, the vast stage was emptied and one heard only the murmur of unseen choruses, saw only the lazy tracery of the tree shadows upon the gray-green jalousies of the old New Orleans house, the door opened on the high balcony and down the winding stone steps came an aging mulatto actress who played, inblack taffeta and diamonds, the procuress of the quadroom ball. She stood there for a moment, serene, silent, queenly, and I could think only of the lost loveliness that was Duse. The noble heod, carved with pain, was Duse's.

When 'Deep River' was having its trial flight in Philadelphia Ethel Barrymore slipped in to snatch what moments she could of it. 'Stay till the last act if you can,' Arthur Hopkins whispered to her, 'and watch Rose McClendon come down those stairs. She can teach some of our most hoity-toity actresses distinction.'

It was Miss Barrymore who hunted him up after the performance to say 'She can teach them all distinction.'

We saw Rose McClendon for the first time in "Roseanne," where she played opposite Paul Robeson. We thought then what a remarkable actress she was, and without recognition by people of her own race. So much for the opening wedge to the legitimate drama driven by Belasco when he gave us our first chance in the mixed cast in "Lulu Belle." But the same critic on the World, goes further with this beautiful comment:

"'Deep River' runs with that tide of the ways of the New York theatre which is clearing more and more room for the great riches the American Negro can bring to it. His music ran ahead of him, as a troupe of trumpeters herald a coming. In the choirs invisible of 'Deep River' many colored folk sang, and in several arias Julius Bledsoe has a chance to enchain a hushed house with the ineffable sweetness of his voice.

For Paul Robeson, that magnificent ebony giant whose concerts here and throughout the country last season were so crowded and so happy, came back on Wednesday in a play written to make some use of the sure gift as an actor which he had revealed in the revivals of 'The Emperor Jones.'"

Arthur Hopkins and Laurence Stallings, authors of "Deep River," frankly confess that they got their idea of the mixed cast from David Belasco.

So David with his sling did slay a mighty big Goliath of Prejudice when he made that opening wedge in the production of "Lulu Belle."

This Harlem

By Eden Bliss

"Deep River" Closes

"Deep River", that bit of Creole sauce heralded far and wide as the first native opera, came and went with scant and quiet was its passing that many who had intended seeing it hardly realized that the opera or operetta, whichever you prefer to call it had closed its doors.

One can but question the causes of its short-lived story. It was likif not over-enthusiastic. The chorus was admittedly superior and the ed by many. The critics were kind settings superb. Interest in Negro m keen.

What, then, brought about the failure of "Deep River?" Was it mismanagement of the buiness end of the project? Was it the fault of the participants? Did they, or did they not measure up to the artistic standards required of them? Was the fault in the vehicle itself? Did the jazz opera of Mr. Harling fail to show the creative spark that the art-loving public was seeking?

Whatever the reason, we are sorry for the passing of "Deep River", and can only hope that the cause was specific and not the beginning of the end of what has been cynically called by some the "Negro Fad."

Florence Mills, Now Starring In London, Writes of Splendid Work Being Done By Louis Drysdale, Voice, Singing Teacher

An interesting letter comes to THE AGE editor from Miss Florence Mills, the dainty little comedienne and dancer, now in London with her "Blackbirds" company for an indefinite run after major triumphs in Paris, in which she tells of work she is doing looking to the further development of her talents.

Not satsified with the position of stardom which is already accorded her, the charming cantatrice is studying hard to develop her singing abilites to a greater degree that it may be possible for her to do even better and more appealing work than she has been doing.

Miss FLORENCE MILLS,

LOUIS DRYSDALE, Tenor

In the letter referred to, she tells of taking several lessons each week with Louis Drysdale, a distinguished teacher of singing and voice production in the true Italian style (bel canto), himself a tenor who maintains luxurious and well-appointed studios in Grotrian-Zteinweg Hall, Wigmore Hall, and at 11 Westbourne Road, Forest Hill, London.

And the most interesting fact in this connection is that Mr. Drysdale is a Negro, a native of Jamaica, British West Indies.

According to his printed announcements, Mr. Drysdale has studied himself with some of the most important and prominent European teachers, including Signor Gustave Garcia, Signor Giovanni Glerici (Hon. R. A. M. Florence), Signor Lenghi-Cellini, all Italian maestros, and Senor Joaquin Bayo, a Spanish master.

Miss Mills, in her breezy letter, writes as follows:

London Pavilion,
London, England
November 22, 1926

Editor of The New York Age:

"It gives me very great pleasure in sending you this letter and the news to follow:

"Here in London is one of our race, Mr. Louis Drysdale, a prominent teacher of voice production and singing. Some of London's best singers have studied and are studying with him, and since my arrival I've been taking several lessons every week with him, and feel happy to say I am very, very satisfied. He is well known over here and is very successful.

"I am sure this will be interesting news to you all, and the mail will bring you some of his papers, etc., and I hope you will take, if possible, the opportunity of making this master known to our race, especially those who come to Europe to study. They will do well to go on to Mr. Drysdale and not anything but the finest possible social advantage. Its influence is softening and educative, and in general it is certain that no function is so beautiful as that at which there is good music to be heard.

"Music has entered into every portion of life during the last few years, not the greatest complainant about the general changes which have place in our social life can say that this increase in good music is g but the finest possible social advantage. Its influence is softenl educative, and in general it is certain that no function is so beautiful as that at which there is good music to be heard.

"This is, perhaps, more noticeable in connection with singing than er phase of music, and yet there are comparatively few really well-voices to-day. This is possibly mainly due to lack of proper training is in the case of singing a more vital essential than in any branch of the art. Of course, the best system of learning to sing alian Method ("Bel Canto,") but here, again, care must be taken in tion of a teacher.

"Music and not the selection of songs is very important. Many people are taken by anything that is sung to them, and the mail will anything but the finest possible social advantage. Its influence is softening and educative, and in general it is certain that no function is successful as that at which there is good music to be heard.

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"I hope you are all fine and dandy. We are doing well, and everybody is pleased. With very best wishes, I am, truly yours,

FLORENCE MILLS

In another mail came a copy of a London journal, "The Coun-

Theatrical:- 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

Charles Gilpin Released From Work on Film of "Uncle Toms Cabin"

(Exclusive Dispatch)
Pacific Coast News Service

..Universal City, California, Sept 18—After but two days of actual work before the camera Charles S. Gilpin has left Universal City and the role of "Tom" and is returning to his first love, the stage.

James B. Lowe Takes Place

Into the role of "Tom" the greatest ever given any Negro since the beginning of motion pictures steps James B. Lowe who has signed a contract with Universal which went into effect Thursday, September 9th. This famous part in the world famous play of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" places Lowe in the foremost rank of motion picture stars and establishes a record for rapid achievement unapproached by any Negro actor.

It was less than three years ago that Lowe walked for the first time before a motion picture camera and for a consideration of some five dollars a day. Today he is receiving one of the largest salaries ever paid a Negro motion picture actor and playing a role that will make him famous the world over.

Seems To Walk Out of Book

Over six feet in heighth, straight as an arrow and just past forty years of age Lowe seems to walk rightout of the book of "Uncle Tom's Cabin so near is he to the discription of "Tom" by Harriet Beecher Stowe.

Other than fitting the part of "Tom" as a perfect type. Lowe is a great actor. His finest work in Los Angeles has been on the stage as "Jones" in "The Emperor Jones" recently staged at a Los Angeles Little Theatre by a group known as the Pot Boilers.

In Motion pictures his parts have been small but always exceptionally well done. At every studio he has always attracted attention and made many friends with the result that no actor other than Lowe could step into Gilpin's former role of "Tom" with so many of the principals of stage and screne predicting success for him and wishing him well.

Selected By Pollard

Is was only after careful consideration and several interviews that Director Pollard decided that Lowe was the man to do "Tom." Mr. Pollard realizes that the name role of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is a trying and difficult one. As result of few considerations together, Director Pollard and Lowe are fast friends with the result that both are working for more than moneary consideration that is involved.

Story of Lowe's Career to Follow

In the near future, this publication, in connection with the Pacific Coast News Bureau, will run an exclusive biography of James B. Lowe together with a series of photos of this star.

RACE GIRLS TO POSE FOR ENGLISH MEMORIAL

Courtesy Boston Chronicle

LONDON, England.—American colored girls from Florence Mills "Black Birds" company, are to pose for a panel to be incorporated as part of a statue of the "Pageant of Empire" and placed in the House of Lords!

Frank Brangwyn, a distinguished painter and member of the Royal Academy, has made all arrangements for members of the "Black Bird" company to pose. The statue, of which their panel is to be a part is to be erected as a memorial to members of the House of Lords who were killed in the World War.

Feature Black American Acts

French Stars Presented in Mixed-Cast Revue at Champs-Elysses Music Hall

PARIS, France, Dec. 24.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau)—American colored artists are receiving an extremely cordial welcome in the foreign amusement centers of London, Paris and Berlin, where they are to be found as the featured attractions in many of the largest theatres.

In London Florence Mills' "Blackbirds Revue" continues to draw at the London Pavilion, where the Prince of Wales recently witnessed his fourth performance of this fast stepping attraction.

In Paris at the Champs-Elysses Music Hall the featured number is a tabloid revue by Henri Falk and Jean Wiener, entitled "Olive at the Home of the Negroes." Besides several noted French stars, the cast contains Jesse Crawford, Allegretti Anderson, Joe Alex, the colored dancer, and a colored troupe with Vance Lowry and his Jazz Kings. In musical circles Leslie Hutchinson, the colored American pianist who has played in practically every capital of Europe during the past two years, recently gave a recital that attracted favorable attention.

In Berlin, Louis Douglas is at the Grosse Schauspielhaus; the team of Mutt and Jeff are at the Barberina, while at the Wintergarden, Greenlee and Drayton, who came over with the "Chocolate Kiddies" under the management of Dr. Leonidoff (Russian), are domiciled for the month as the feature attraction.

Josephine Baker, who was with the Revue Negro, is now engaged in motion picture work in Berlin.

At the Theatre Des Westens in Berlin, Ruth Bayton, formerly of the Folies Bergere in Paris, is serving a three months' contract as the only colored performer in the cast.

D. BELASCO ENTHUSES OVER NEGRO ACTORS STAGE POSSIBILITIES

(Reported by permission of Liberty)

(Reprinted By Permission Of "Liberty")

David Belasco, America's most eminent producer, who is reponsible for the sensational "Lulu Belle" the first master play of any moment in America, writes an extensive article in "Liberty", a weekly magazine entitled. "Tomorrow's Stage and the Negro."

Excerpts from the article reprinted in the following paragraphs are interesting and hold out hope the ultimate rise of the Negro dramatically. The first paragraphs outline the war dances of Negroes in their native environment. Following he says, "This response to emotional suggestion, while not confined to the Negro, is more delicately developed in his nature than in any other people on earth. It is as dominating today as when hrum hypnosis was the medium whereby his reactions were fired.

Negro A New Force

Fate has decreed that I should know the Negro of our modern days, that I should know him and his psychology intimately. And the contact has brought me to this finding: The Theatre Of Tomorrow Must Reckon With A New Force—The Race Of Ham. I say this in all sincerity, out of my fifty years of labor for the American stage: The Negro from the day onward, will compel recognition through the sheer power of his instinctive mime talent!"

Ability Unsurpassed

I will go further and declare that no race even the sorrow stricken Jew, can surpass the Negro for instinctive stage ability. The same receptivity that drove their ancestors to battle frenzy at the sound of war drums has been translated by generations of contact with civilization into terms of emotion-expression. delicate and sensitive in the extreme. And as a climax to my prediction, I believe that another decade will see a Negro theatre in which we of the Caucasion race will witness a surprising development of this heretofore dormant nature gift.

Amazed at Discovery

Six month ago I thought of the Negro as one not too ell equipped for his fight for recognition. Today, amazed by understanding that has cme to me, I see him on the threshold of a new achievment. So eager is he to express that urge from within that it amounts to instinctive talent. These discoveries came to me wih the production of a new play—Lulu Belle—with a cast of 117 Negroes and thirteen white players. Of this company only eleven had previos stage experience.

Loyalty Proved

They never failed me in loyalty, interest, or ambition to achieve. There were no defections or failres. When the play opened in Philadelphia it was with the original cast. Ordinarily in a company of that size there would have been ten or a dozen changes. In my company there are representatives of all walks of Negro life. One, Madam De Knight is a well known colored educator and a leader of women's activities. Another, Miss Evelyn Preer, will, I believe, make her mark as an emotional actress one of these days. Already she is a splendid reader, gifted with a splendid diction and an understanding few achieve.

Educated Folk

Edna Thomas, likewise, displays fire, imagery and talent. Then we have a young dentist working for funds with which to complete his course; a man studying for the ministry; several who are taking correspondence courses, and others who have graduated from institutions of learning.

Negro Has Arrived

One is a Columbia man, several from Fisk University, and there are accountants and men skilled in het trades. I am glad to be the first person to show the Negro, not in caricature, but as he really is. It is a far cry from native kraal to cosmospolitan stage—but The Negro has made the journey. Watch Him During The Next Decade

"Uncle Tom" Jinx Clings to Harry Pollard's Trail

By Rosalind Shaffer.

HOLLYWOOD, Cal.—[Special Correspondence.]—There is an old stage tradition that a production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" is always attended by some sort of calamity.

In the case of the movie production Harry Pollard, the director, is the victim of the jinx. Last year he suffered a broken jaw while filming scenes in the east for the film version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin." Last week he sustained another injury to his jaw.

Margaretta Fischer, his wife, who is playing in the film as Eliza, was considerably worried about it. During the excitement of an intense scene Pollard strained the scarcely mended fracture and an X-ray showed a new cleavage along the newly knit bones. The results were not utterly serious and Pollard was able to take his company away for further location south and east.

The sets built at the Universal lot for "Uncle Tom's Cabin" are most complete. The huge Shelby mansion is lavishly equipped with genuine antiques, including gorgeous wool hooked rugs, samplers, plush whiskbroom holders, massive mahoganies, laden walnut whatnots, family portraits, old glassware and decanters with cold tea representing wines. The cold tea was the only unsouthern and nonaccurate touch.

Outside were the broad verandas with the mounting block across the gravelled drive. The formal garden at the side had dusty miller and fern borders around the weeping willows and large moss hung trees.

Slave Quarters Realistic.

To the rear slave quarters have been accurately reproduced. There are seventeen complete Negro cabins with a large community oven in the clearing and the hoes on which the hoe cake was baked in the fire. A wooden block similar to a butcher's chopping block stands for the darkies to beat out biscuits on.

A large cotton weighing house stands at the end of the quarters with its scale and the rough log walls hung with tufts of the blown cotton.

A river with a wharf is nearby, the latter stacked with baled cotton, and beyond that on the river, the Universal City creek, a huge sidewheeler waits for the cotton to be loaded.

The baying of bloodhounds comes ominously from across the water. In this case, however, the bloodhounds are confined safely in the walls of the Universal zoo. There are eight of them with large eyes and ears like hot water bottles and a bay that makes the night horrible to residents nearby.

Virginia Grey, aged 9, with dark brown hair and two front teeth missing, after the manner of children acquiring their second set of incisors, has been chosen for Little Eva in "Uncle Tom's Cabin." She is the daughter of a woman employé on the Universal City lot. She probably will go through the picture with brown curls, instead of wearing the blonde wig that would make her look like the Little Eva of the stage.

Late Evelyn Mason Proved Inspiration To Garland Anderson

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Nov. 24.—(By A. N. P.)—Evelyn Mason, the woman whose passing is lamented by more of the people of Los Angeles, than that of any woman recently, will be missed by one man, too, to whom she has been a guiding star. This is Garland Anderson, the new famous author of "Appearances," the first play by a Negro author, ever to appear on Broadway. Mr. Anderson met her while he was in New York, trying in the face of discouragements to get his play before the public, and it was due to the same philosophy of good cheer, that she taught both the high and lowly in Los Angeles and to her great encouragement that much of his later success came.

To Present Play Of Negro Rural Life

NEW YORK, May 13.—"Goophered," a play with music dealing with Negro life in South Carolina, will be presented at a theatre in Harlem during the latter part of this month, according to an announcement from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The text of the play was written by Caspar Garrett, doorman of the Forty-ninth street theatre.

Hall Johnson, Negro violinist and composer, who played in the famous Miller & Lyles Shuffle Along orchestra, has supplied the music and lyrics, with several additional lyrics by Langston Hughes, whose poem, "Weary Blues," won first prize in a magazine contest last year.

"Goophered" is said to be an attempt to show a truer picture of Negro rural life than has been presented in the colored revues. Negro spirituals, work songs, and dances will have a prominent place in the play.

PAUL ROBESON STARS IN "BLACK BOY."

New York, Oct 18.—Paul Robeson won new laurels for himself at the opening production of "Black Boy", a melodrama of James Tully and Frank Dazey.

The play was given its initial performance at the Comedy Theater here. It goes without saying that theatergoers prefer that Eugene O'Neil should forever write the plays in which Paul Robeson is to appear. The play is in three acts and is rather tawdry. It lacks distinction save that which is brought about through the artistic acting of Paul Robeson. The circumstances of the play are these: A lad goes forth with a desire to win championship in the prize rings; he falls in with a woman whom he believes to be white and who claims to love him; he gains laurels by knocking out the fighter whose sparring partner he has been engaged to be. Robeson, it is claimed, plays all the roles well. He is at first in splendor, in a luxurious Harlem apartment where he is, of course, attended by those well-known habitues of the bright lights; the woman betrays him, because a man who knows much of her evil ways, tells her to, and "Black Boy" is forced to return to the life of workman, which he does with absolute abandon. To some the play is repugnant, but everyone is deeply impressed and moved by the acting of "its dusky star with his fine physique, his voice of deep, deep music and his genuine genius of the actor." Mr. Robeson sings, and thus brings more breathless silence over the theater and everyone watches him as takes "at one moment and another his full artist' stature above the mere mass of [illegible] on the stage.

THE CRAZE IN EUROPE

LONDON, PARIS AND BERLIN THEATRES FEATURE BLACK AMERICAN ACTS — FRENCH STARS PRESENTED IN MIX-CAST REVUE AT CHAMPS-ELYSEES MUSIC HALL

Paris, France, Dec. 20, 1926.—American Colored artists are receiving an extremely cordial welcome in the foreign amusement centers of London, Paris and Berlin where they are to be found as the featured attractions in many of the largest theatres.

In London Florence Mills "Blackbird Revue" continues to draw at the London Pavilion where the Prince of Wales recently witnessed his fourth performance of this fast stepping attraction.

In Paris at the Champs-Elysees Music Hall the featured number is a tabloid revue by Carl Falk and Jean Wiener, entitled "Olive at the Home of the Negroes." Besides several noted French stars the cast contains Jesse Crawford, Allegretti Anderson, Joe Alex the Colored dancer and a Race troupe with Vance Lowry and his Jazz Kings. In musical circles Leslie Hutchinson, the Colored American pianist who played in practically every capital of Europe during the past two years, recently gave a recital that attracted favorable attention.

In Berlin, Louis Douglas is at the Grosse Schausplelhaus; the team of Mutt and Jeff are at the Barberina, while at the Wintergarden, Greenlee "Chocolate Kiddies" under the management of Dr. Leonidoff (Russian) are domiciled for the month as the feature attraction.

At the Theatre Des Westens in Berlin, Ruth Bayton, formerly of the Follies Bergere in Paris, is serving a three months contract as the only Colored performer in the cast.)

Charles Gilpin in the Bronx

Will Again Appear in "The Emperor Jones" at the Intimate Playhouse

(From The Home News)

"The Emperor Jones" opens at the Intimate Playhouse, 180th street and Boston road, Friday evening, as its second production of the season. Charles S. Gilpin, 36 W. 138th street, is again to be seen in the title role.

It was "The Emperor Jones" which gained Gilpin his fame as the leading colored actor in this country. Gilpin was seen in the title role in the original production of the piece exactly six years ago at the Provincetown Playhouse, downtown. Paul Robeson and others have since played the part but Gilpin still has the palm for the best performance in the play.

"The Emperor Jones" was first staged Nov. 1, 1920, and besides establishing Gilpin, also served to elevate its author to the forefront of present-day American playwrights.

So pronounced was the success of the play that after seven weeks at the tiny Greenwich Village Theatre it was taken up to Broadway and played at the Selwyn Theatre for a like period. It then settled down at the Princess Theatre for another 32 weeks. Then followed a week at the Majestic Theatre in Brooklyn and another at the Shubert-Riviera Theatre, following which it toured the country.

Original Cast Remains.

Most of the original members of the cast remained in the play in its more than two years of touring, and this same company, including Hazel Mason and Marcy Hart, will appear in support of Gilpin at the Intimate Playhouse.

The presentation of "Emperor Jones" at the Intimate Playhouse is a new production, and is sponsored by Sidney Stavrof, the actor, who is managing director of the theatre. Performances will be given every night, including Sunday, with an extra performance Sunday afternoon.

Theatrical - 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

Paul Robeson Wins Praise Of New York Critic

Colored Actor Triumphs In Latest Broadway Production, "Black Boy," The Story Of A Pugilist

NEW YORK, Oct. 20.—The following article was written by one of New Yorks leading dramatic critics, Percy Hammond, and appeared in the Thursday, October 7 issue of the New York Herald-Tribune. It is the criticism of the play "Black Boy" by Jim Tully and Frank Dazey, presented at the Comedy Theatre by Horace Liveright. Mr. Paul Robeson, one of the race's outstanding actors, took the leading part and was supported by a notable cast.

The Play

The racy annals of pugilism were amplified last night at the Comedy by an active record of the joys and hardships of a Negro prizefighter called "Black Boy." In it Mr. Paul Robeson, the sable gentleman, actor and troubadour, was to be seen in a fine impersonation of the winning role—first as a lowly waif around a training camp; then as a bumptious mercenary, the champion of the world, and finally as a defeated has-been licking the wounds of adversity. The play was a drastic illustration of the ups and downs of sporting life, full of picturesque episodes from the anterooms of the arenas. Rough, but with a heart of gold, it used bad language, it misbehaved itself in other little ways and was, in general, truthful to the life. Sturdy amusement for sturdy amusement seekers.

"Black Boy" had been in progress but a few minutes last night before Mr. Robeson infatuated the first-nighters by crooning a Negro spiritual and by socking a brutal and aged prize-fighter in the jowl. When Mr. Robeson sings, all memories of Mr. Al Jolson's music take the count; and to ... east his voice is superior to the peal of any pipe organ in the Times Square parish. But it was speedily rendered mute last evening, since this play had a purpose more energetic. So skillful with his knuckles was Black Boy in the training camp of "The Mauler" that as the second act began he was visible in a florid flat in Harlem, the crowned king of fisticuffs, surrounded by a court of greedy buzzards. What a lesson was here conveyed to colored prize fighters dancing on the precarious waves of glory! Black Boy had become addicted to the black bottle. His affluence and the counterfeit idolatry of his retinue had gone to his head and he was buying pearl necklaces and two pianos at a time. He had but one friend—and that was Irene, a trampled girl who uplifted her pretty head amongst the poison ivy of sportsmanship, asking only that she be beloved by her king. He thought she was a white woman, but she was not.

A word must be said in salute to Miss Edith Warren, who acted the role of the noble but sinful lady of the play. A recruit to the drama from the chorus of the Club Alabam, she was excellent in the performance of her task, having gifts of impersonation unusual even in these days of expert acting by young women. She was especially faithful in the scene where she and Black Boy's spurious hangers-on listened to the radio as it told the details of her champion's defeat. On the eve of his conflict with One Round Reilly, Black Boy had staged an orgy in his apartment and was in no condition to defend his title. I enjoyed that scene more than any prizefight I have been bored by since the birth of Mr. Dempsey at Toledo. It was an expert device by Mr. Burton, the director, and it caused the audience last night to heave and pant with agitation. Not the least enjoyable detail of the incident was Miss Warren's eloquent and unstudied pantomime as she listened to the rise and fall of the hero she had betrayed.

What more could a drama lover wish than to see the exciting exposures afforded in "Black Boy?" Many of the secrets of the pugilistic hippodromes are unscreened in its progress and the white, though foolish, soul and muscles of a black battler are exhibited and analyzed in its graphic course. You may, if you are not chilled by propriety, enjoy Mr. Robeson's hearty and honest portrayal and join with others in amused contemplation of the frolics and disasters that make his rise and fall an evening's entertainment. . . . The authors, Messrs. Jim Tully and Frank Dazey, are good, perhaps too good, in supplying their characters with juicy speeches. As one of them said after delivering himself of a profound crack, "That ought to be in the Bible." Principal among the aids to the play was Edward Redding as Black Boy's hard manager, whose nickname, "Square Deal," he said, was won because he had never cheated himself. Also Fuller Mellish, Jr., representing a square and bitter employee of the

training camps, whose other arm ... been lost in the Argonne.

ACTRESS IS COMPARED WITH THE GREAT DUSE

The HERALD - COMMONWEALTH carried a reprint in the issue of October 30th, by Allison Smith, white, who also paid tribute to Rose McClendon (Mrs. Henry Creamer) "Deep River" closed in October 30th.

Comparison of a colored actress with the late Eleonora Duse, considered one of the greatest actresses who ever lived, is made by th dramatic critic of the New York World, Alexander Wolcott, commenting on the performance of "Deep River" the new "jazz opera." The Mr. Wolcott writes:

"In the third act of 'Deep River' when, for a moent, the vast stage was emptied and one heard only the murmur of unseen choruses, saw only the lazy tracery of the tree shadows upon the grey-green jalousies of the old New Orleans house, the door opened on the high balcony and down the winding stone steps came an aging mulatto actress who played, in black taffeta and diamonds, the ... of the quadroon ball. She stood there for a moment, serene, silent, queenly, and I could think only of the lost loveliness that was Duse. The noble head, carved with pain, was Duse's.

"When 'Deep River' was having its trial flight in Philadelphia Ethel Barrymore slipped in to snatch what woments she could of it. 'Stay till the last act if you can,' Arthur Hopkins whispered to her, 'and watch Rose McClendon come down those stairs. She can teach some of our most hoity-toity actresses distinction.' It was Miss Barrymore who hunted him up after the performance to say, 'She can teach them all distinction'."

PLAY WITH NEGRO ACTORS AT PROVINCETOWN THEATRE

New York, Dec. 17.—The N. A. A. C. P. is informed by the Provincetown Playhouse, 133 Macdougal Street, New York, that its next production will be "Abraham's Bosom," a play by Paul Green, with a cast including the well-known singer, Julius Bledsoe, Rose McClendon, who played successfully in the "jazz opera" Deep River; Abbie Mitchell, who has appeared frequently on Broadway; Frank Wilson, who played in Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings;" and a supporting cast which includes H. Ben Smith, James Dunmore, Thomas Mos... Melvin Greene, Stanley Greene, ... thine Lattimer and R. S. Huey.

The play is directed by Jasper Deeter with settings by the well-known stage designer, Cleon Throckmorton.

Uncle Tom Cast Is On Way To Memphis

Universal City, Calif., Oct., PNCB—Aboard a special train, James B. Lowe, playing the part of Uncle Tom, and the principals of the Universal cast of Uncle Tom's Cabin motion picture production are enroute to Memphis, Tennessee to do river boat and cotton field scenes.

Harry Pollard, the director, is of course commander-in-chief of the expedition that includes about thirty-five persons. A large river steamboat has been chartered on which scenes will be made down the river with the final destination being New Orleans.

About four weeks will be spent on the southern location after which the company will return to Universal to do the St. Clair and Simon Legree plantation episodes.

BLACK NEWEST STAGE COLOR

By Daniel W. Chase

Phila., Pa., ANP.—Each season sees notable actors of color on the legitimate stage; if not actors, we have plays depicting Negro life in which a large number of colored players take part. We had with us "Lulu Belle."

Then came "Deep River" with Julius Bledsoe doing a turn, and the current season swings in with "Black Boy" wherein Paul Robeson has a leading part in this play. Metropolitan critics say that "Black Boy" is a drama of "roustabouts and the bums". It is added that "Black Boy" is hanging on only "by the shiny white teeth of that swinging Robeson lad".

Freddy Washington (Edith Warren) who first made an appearance with the "Shuffle Along" chorus, and later drifted to the night clubs, where she was discovered at the Club Alabam and selected by the manager of the play for this special part, as she ran true to form and was able to "pass". Miss Washington is a Georgian by birth, being just twenty-two years old. The critic is speaking of her acting says 'she has absorbed a lot in a short ime."

WARNER BROS. RAISE SALARIES OF 29 COLORED ACTORS

Hollywood, Cal., Oct. 18.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau).—No expense is being spared in Warner Bros. endeavor to make the new Syd Chaplin comedy feature, "The Missing Link," the biggest comedy hit of the 1927 season. Not satisfied with spending $1,000 for a gorilla costume for Sam Baker, the colored actor who will portray the gorilla part, the salaries of 29 colored actors were voluntarily increased 75 per cent.

Supporting Everett Brown, the colored actor who is cast as the African chief, are 153 colored actors used as native Africans in the picture which has its locals in the African jungle. The colored talent was furnished by the only colored casting office in the film business, conducted by Jimmy Smith, the "colored Will Hays of the movies."

Uncle Tom Cast Off to Tennessee

UNIVERSAL CITY, Calif., Oct. 30—Aboard a special train, James B. Lowe, playing the part of Uncle Tom, and the principals of the Universal cast of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" motion picture production are enroute to Memphis, Tennessee, to do river boat and cotton field scenes.

Harry Pollard, the director, is of course commander-in-chief of the expedition that includes about thirty-five persons. A large river steamboat has been chartered on which scenes will be made down the river, with the final destination being New Orleans.

About four weeks will be spent on the southern location, after which the company will return to Universal, to do the St. Clair and Simon Legree plantation episodes.

"BLACK BOY" WITH ROBESON CLOSES IN N. Y.

Afro American

Drama Of Harlem And South Has Short Run At Comedy Theatre

11-13-26

Baltimore Journal

LANGUAGE "STRONG" CRITICS DECLARE

Use Of "Nigger" And Other Words Said To Have Nauseated Audience

NEW YORK.—The Horace Liveright production of "Black Boy" with our own favorite, Paul Robeson, in the title role at the Comedy Theatre, West 41st Street, closed with Saturday evening's performance.

In an interview your correspondent had with the distinguished young football star, singer, character actor, and gentleman, he said he had decided to return to his concert work.

It seems the "Black Boy" producers handles a large sum of "Tall Green" but don't put much of it out on publicity and general advertising that makes any reasonable product sell in this or any other neck of the woods.

There was a fortune to be made with "Black Boy" in a season's run in Greater New York and another in a tour of cities of the one week stand calibre.

"Black Boy" is a drama in the rough, with a touch of Negro life in the cruder side of our environment. The story deals with the experience of a black boy from Mississippi who as a framed convict jumps bail and lands penniless and hungry at the door of Mr. Square Deal's training camp of pugilists, which is the opening scene of the first act.

The author supplied the use of the words, "Nigger," "Niggerheads and Nigger God" until it almost nauseated many of the more cultured people who attended Saturday matinee, and by the way, nearly every seat was filled.

Other language could be used in all the lines of the first act that would have just as strong effect on the audience, as well as all the gutter phrases given to Mr. Robeson and his capable cast of twelve artists supporting him in "Black Boy."

Five years elapses between the action of the first and second acts. The second act shows Black Boy's apartment in Harlem after Mr. Square Deal has made him into a real pugilist and champion of the world.

With a "Moonshine" or gin soiree in full blast, with a jazz orchestra blowing all the juice out of their jazz instruments, with a large following of hangers-on, trainers and Black Boy's lady friend, Irene, having a good time.

Henry Troy plays the part of Professor Langhorne Dubree and after a short visit gets $5,000 for his colored school from Black Boy. Several songs are sung during the action of the play. Black Boy is then backed for his last championship battle and bets all his savings on himself when he is framed by Irene and Square Deal, and after going to the fight heavily soused, is beaten by his white contender. Black Boy returns to his Harlem apartment only to find Irene packing to make her getaway. Then his one loyal white pal, "Whitey" tells him to come on let's go to California; Black Boy to sing and play the mouth-organ while Whitey with one arm passes the hat, because in California it never snows, you don't have to buy many clothes. So they agree to this and the curtain falls with Black Boy putting on his old overalls while he sings of Mother, and "Whitey" anxiously waiting for his journey to the land of sunshine and flowers with Black Boy.

Ku Klux Production

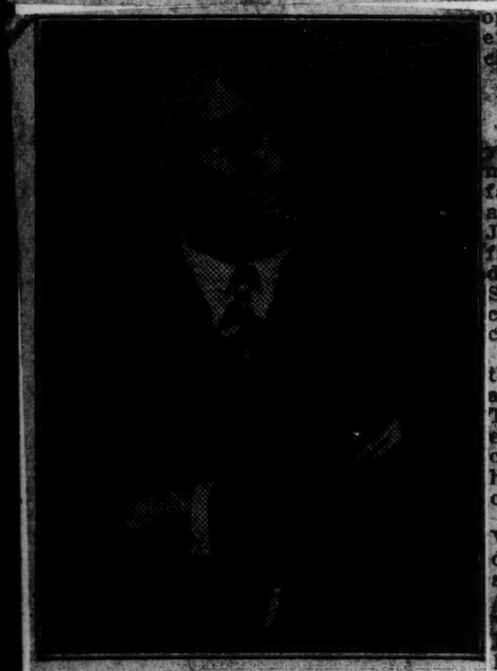
Some day soon, some great writer will arise out of our masses, and write a real drama of American Life that will be a classic, and a credit to its author and interpretors, and not a Ku Klux product devised to keep the Negro down forever!

PAUL ROBESON STIRS NEW YORK

New York, Nov. 12 (C. P. B.)—"Black Boy" is taking its place in the [illegible] theatrical world along with great character plays of the time, and Paul Robeson, the singer-actor, is stirring the hearts of the atre-goers with his honest interpretation of the title character. No less famous critic than Robert Bell, (white) says of Robeson and his art "What he (Robeson) does do is so thoroughly believed in by the actor himself that he succeeded in interpreting an emotion to his best ability and is an artist of a certain unity. I defy you to bring toward this man your usual humdrum dramatic criticism and at the same time I defy you not to be impressed by the sweetness, exuberance and primitive power of his personality. He has succeeded in stirring up an appreciation of the artistic endeavor of his Race."

Theatrical - 1926
Individual Troupes, etc.

TEXAS SINGER TO APPEAR IN OPERADEEP RIVER"-- VOO DOO KING



JULIUS BLEDSOE

New York, N. Y., August 6—Julius Bledsoe, baritone, who recently cancelled a European concert tour, has signed a contract at $1,000 a week with Arthur Hopkins, producer of "Deep River" an opera which is now in rehearsal and will be given here in the fall.

Mr. Bledsoe, in the role of the Voodoo King in this colossal opera, is the first Negro to appear in such a capacity in the operatic field in America.

The libretta for "Deep River" was written by Laurence Stallings, of The New York World, who helped to write "What Price Glory?" and "The Big Parade."

W. Frank Harling, who wrote "The Life of St. Agnes" for the Chicago Opera Company in which Rosa Raisa was starred last season, is the composer.

Arthur Hopkins, the producer of this opera, is one of the best known producers in New York. "What Price Glory," was produced by him.

"Deep River" will have a chorus of about one hundred voices, and three conductors using the baton at the same time. The music in the opera is modern and polyphonic in every respect. Throughout it is a decided African scale or mood.

Bledsoe Comes From Misical Stock.

Julius Bledsoe, a twenty-seven year old baritone, comes from a musical family in Waco, Texas. His father, the late Henry [illegible]dsoe, was a tenor; his mother, the late Mrs. Jessie Cobb Bledsoe, [illegible] his first musical appearance [illegible] direction of his aunt, Mrs. Spiller, was at the age of [illegible] credit fo Mr. Bledsoe's musical success goes to his mother.

Mr. Bledsoe was educated at Central Teras College of Waco, Texas, anr at Bishop College of Marshall, Texas, where he received his bachelor of arts degree, finished the course in piano, composition and history given there, conducted the choir and taught for two years.

At Union University, Richmond, Va., he had charge of the choih and did postigraduate work in the school.

In commenting on Mr. Bledsoe's voice, after a recent recital in the East High School Auditorium, Columbus, Ohio, The Columbus [illegible]ening Dispatch said in part: A voice and personality, new to the concert stage and so different from all others, that they may be styled literally unique, belong to the Negro baritone, Julius Bledsoe.

He has a baritone voice of mellow quality, capable of great shading, and generally well produced. He seldom cramps his tones, but sings with relaxation and with the most open use of his media. Strange his diction in foreign tongues is often more clean cut than hie English.

Mr. Bledsoe came to New York in 1919 to enter Columbia University where he has done work in language, philosophy, sciences and medicine. His vocal training in New York City was begun with Mme. Marie Sellka of the Martin-Smith School, Inc., 135 West 136th Street. Since then he has worked with several other vocal masters. The New York Evening Post in October [illegible] a recital at Town Hall Saturday evening, Mr. Bledsoe's rich voice was heard to advantage in songs of his own race, and especially in one which he himself added to the program, a heritage from his grandmot$her, Mrs. Feriber Cobb, who lives in Waco, Texas, called "Home, Home, Home."

Before coming to New York, Mr. Bledsoe toured Texas as a concert pianist. His singing tours carried him into the following states: Louisiana, Oklahoma, Virginia, South Carolina, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, Massachusetts and others.

Another criticism on Mr. Bledsoe's voice, by Glenn Dillard Gunn of the Chicago Herald-Examiner, might show why he should succeed in the role as "Voodoo King." It is as follows:

I believe Bledsoe combines art and native gift in fuller measure than any of the several interesting singers of his race before the public. His voice is appealing in quality, ample in power and range and is used with consummate skill.

During his free hours, Mr. Bledsoe is working on a repertoire in preparation for a late winter or early spring concert tour.

—K. N. F. Service.

BLEDSOE SIGNS $1000 A WEEK OPERA CONTRACT

To Appear In "Deep River" As Voodoo King, Texas Baritone Cancelled European Tour.

New York City, N. Y. July 31 Julius Bledsoe, baritone, who recently cancelled a European concert tour, has signed a contract at $1,000 a week with Arthur Hopkins, producer of "Deep River" an opera which is now in rehearsal and will be given here [illegible] fall.

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MILLER AND LYLES DREAM OF BROADWAY

"Shuffle Along" Stars Want Colored Theatre On Long White Way

PLAYS TO APPEAL TO ALL PLAYGOERS

First Play, They Say, Then They'll Put It Over In Their Theatre

A theatre on Broadway with the idea in view of portraying the serious side of our group, is the dream of Flournoy E. Miller [illegible] Lyles, [illegible] of "SHUFFLE ALONG" and probably the two greatest comedians on the stage today.

Both Miller and Lyles are serious in this ambition. Both are educated men, having taken A. B. degrees at Fisk University and [illegible] have had experience in the management of a theatre, having established the Pekin Theater in Chicago in 1904, which they state was the first theater devoted exclusively to their race in the country.

In a statement given out by Lyles, he says: Before we can get the theater, we must make a production of such a play, then later the theater might come across. Neither the plays presented nor the theatre would be in the hands of white men. But our appeal would be to a cosmopolitan audience.

We have some wealthy citzens of our own race in New York and some of them are already interested. But we shall aim to interest white people, too, for we wish to help our race to a better position in the world.

Negro Star Makes Hit In French Revue

Josephine Baker, a Colored Dancer and Singer

(N. A. A. C. P. S.—Writing on the current Folies-Bergere in Paris, E. E. Cummings, in the September "Vanity Fair" asserts of Josephine Baker, a colored dancer and singer, that she is the latest and most astounding development of the Parisian revue.

"As a member of the Chocolate Dandies chorus," writes Mr. Cummings, "she resembled some tall, vital, incomparably fuild night mare which [illegible]

sed its eyes and warped its limbs in a purely unearthly manner—some vision which opened new avenues of fear, which suggested nothing but itself and which, consequently, was strictly esthetic. It may seem preposterous that this terrifying nightmare should have become the most beautiful (and beautiful is what we mean) star of the Parisian stage. Yet such is the case."

In the present spectacle Mr. Cummings describes Miss Baker's "get-up" as consisting of "a few bananas and not too much jewelry." He continues "Herself is two perfectly fused things: an entirely beautiful body and a beautiful command of its entirety. Her voice (simultaneously uncouth and exquisite—luminous as only certain dark voices are luminous) is as distinctly a part of this body as are her gestures, which emanate a spontaneous or personal rigidty only to dissolve it in a premeditation at once liquid and racial."

TWO NEGRO ARTISTS APPEAR IN "SALOME"

Los Angeles, PCNB.—In the presentation of Oscar Wilde's "Salome" by the Little Theatre group of Los Angeles, at the Potboiler Theatre last night, the lovers of the spoken drama had the opportunity of comparing the same part by the same actor in the silent drama as previously played by him upon the screen.

Nigel de Bruiler who played the role of John the Baptist in the drama used the same characterization as portrayed by him in playing the same part opposite Nazimova a few years ago in the screen production of "Salome."

Supporting DeBruier was an all star cas tincluding Ingeberg Torrup the Danish dancer, seen in "What Price Glory," "Lullaby' and in "Peer Gynt" who appeared as Salome; Gareth Hughes as Herrod, Ruth Helen Davis as Herodias, Jas. B. Lowe, the colored stage and screen actor, as the executioner and Onest Conley, juvenile film actor as the slave. Conley is the 18 year old son of Madame Sul Te Wan both of whom are frequently seen in screen productions.

Duncan Sisters And Evelyn Mason Would Produce "Topsy And Eva" With Entire Race Cast

Hundred or More Actors Interviewed At Los Angeles Theatre By Trio of Famous Women.

(By Jimmie Smith)

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Aug. 26.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau.)—The city of Los Angeles, now the capital of the motion picture firmament, promises to attract first notice as the producing center for the greatest musical comedy since the historic "Shuffle Along" [illegible] records and revived that class of entertainment in America and Europe.

To Evelyn Mason, psychologist, lecturer and former leading lady of Garland Anderson's "Appearances," the New York stage play, goes the credit for interesting the renowned Duncan Sisters (white), stars of "Topsy and Eva," with the idea of turning their vehicle out with a colored cast.

"Topsy and Eva," it will be remembered, has run for three years with the Duncan sisters in the title roles. The comedy just completed a successful run at Erlanger's Theater here in Los Angeles. It is a musical version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and with a colored cast should make a mint of money.

To ascertain if there is enough talent available to cast a majority of the parts in Los Angeles, a try-out for all local performers was given last Tuesday afternoon at the Gamut Club Theater, with the Duncan sisters as interested spectators.

Hundreds or More Perform

The call for tryouts was answered by some hundred professionals of the stage, screen and cabarets. It was a universal turnout of the entire professional fraternity of Los Angeles, and after the many actors had gone through their best specialties, consuming the entire afternoon, the Duncan sisters left the theater visibly pleased.

There will possibly be one more tryout this week, and everything being satisfactory, contracts will be signed with the Duncan sisters as personal backers and directors and Evelyn Mason as manager of the show. The premier of the musical comedy is scheduled to take place in Los Angeles.

BERT GOLDBERG TO MANAGE MAMIE SMITH

Bert Goldberg, who for the past two seasons has been ahead of his brother's "Seven Eleven" company, has just closed a contract with Mamie Smith under the [illegible] which he will have exclusive control of the record singer and her company for the next three years.

Paul Robeson in New Play

Horace Liveright began rehearsals of "Black Boy" the first play on his producing [illegible] Tuesday morning. Paul Robeson, who created the leading role in Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chillun," will be the star of the comedy drama, written by Jim Tulley. Mr. Robeson is noted for his great ability, having attracted attention as an athlete, actor and singer. The colored public of New York eagerly awaits the premier of this new play.

RACE ACTRESS GETS ATTRACTIVE UNIVERSAL MOVIE CONTRACT

Colored Cabaret Star Signs For Second Jewel Production

Universal City, Calif., Aug. 14—(Pacific Coast News Bureau)—Carolyn Snowden, popular colored cabaret star of the Hollywood night life clubs, has been signed by Universal to appear in her second Jewel production, "The Sensation Seekers," a Louis Weber production from the story "Egypt" by Ernest Pascal, on which work will start next week.

In "Marriage Clause"

Miss Snowden has just completed her part as maid in "The Marriage Clause," the first of the Jewel productions to be made by Louis Weber under her new contract with Universal. Francis X. Bushman and Billy Dove are the featured players supported by a cast which includes Warner Oland, Harri LaGrade, Andre Cheron, Carolyn Snowden and Oscar Smith, a Colored actor who strated in pictures at the Lasky studios as wallie Field's valet.

May Play "Topsy."

..As the "Topsy" part. in. "Uncle Tom's Cabin" still remains unfilled, there is a strong possibility that Miss Snowden will be chosen for the coveted position. At least the consensus of opinion is that "Topsy" characterization should be a natural protrayal rather than a black face substitution.

Started in San Francisco

Carolyn Snowden received her first stage experience in San Francisco in 1923 in Sam Harris' musical comedy "Struttin Along." Coming to Los Angeles she became quite popular in the Night Clubs and Cafes heading several revues by Franchon & Marco. Before entering pictures she was the featured drawing card at the Club Alabam and and more recently the Nightengale Cafe.

Theatrical – 1926
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK CITY WORLD
APRIL 11, 1926

Mills of the Gallery Gods

By Dudley Nichols

Behind the scenes in the Alhambra Theatre in Harlem where Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds of 1926" opened for a six weeks' run before going to London:

CONFUSION, all is confusion. You wonder first how in the world they ever make a show out of all this backstage hubbub. Florence Mills has the de luxe dressing room. Until Lew Leslie's show crowded in, the Alhambra, in West 126th Street, was a "motion picture palace." Dressing rooms are scarce. Small booths have been rigged in the wings, like square tents, for the chief dancing girls. You see their shadows on these tent-walls as they squirm into their costumes. "Hell!" comes an anguished voice. She has miscalculated with a pin.

"Hey," the electrician bawls, "get me them thousand watt lamps. Get a move on, will ya?"

His helper dives through a throng and disappears. The curtain is down and the stage is filled with a practice group. Lew Leslie, hat on the back of his head, is exhorting them:

"Now don't forget. You sit right there. Over here you four! Johnny, you're by that table. Lean over, that's right. Now remember your cue . . ."

Preliminaries

Out in front the jazz band, the Plantation Orchestra with Johnny Dunn and Shrimp Jones, is tuning up. All Harlem is out there looking on. The whole house wears the dark livery of the burnished sun.

"Now remember," Lew Leslie is saying, "You say, 'Come on Kimby, give us a song!' Then that's the cue for you picks!"

Four young pickaninnies nod, eyes excited and sparkling like electric lights. They are the pickaninny quartet.

"They'll knock the whole house stiff," says Walter Harzbrun by way of interpretation. "Leslie just went out in Harlem and grabbed them. They're hot sketches."

The pickaninnies strut about sublimely. They're in the seventh heaven.

"Oh mamma!" exclaims a stage hand, awestruck. "Look at them dogs." He is pointing at the feet of the "pick" in the rear, whose ponderous shoes are hobnailed and steel-plated.

They're Off

The orchestra goes off with a bang and everyone hops into place just before the curtain rolls up. . . ."Come on, Kimby, give us a song". . . And the four midgets pipe up a barber shop chord. . .They take the house. They are natural performers. All Negroes are natural performers. They don't have to play at playing. They just play and that's all there is to it.

Florence Mills sings a song. . . "I'm a little blackbird, looking for a bluebird, tooooo. . .Boo-hoo-hoooo-hoooo. . .I'm a little jazzbo, lookin' for a rainbow, tooooo". . .And so on.

It is old home week for Harlem. Harlem loves Florence Mills. She represents success, fame, happiness—all that may be hoped for by a sanguine race. She is the melodious, impish spirit of the Afro-American embodied piquantly. She can charm you with all that is birdlike or squirrel-like in her. Or she can move you to instant laughter with the comical spirit that is always ready to break out of its so-small container. Or she can move something deep down in you with her genius for grotesquerie. The struttings and monkeyshines, the absurd awryness 'of things she does, unexpectedly, as if they had just come into a whimsical gay mind. And in her small throat she hides all manner of funny little sounds that flutter out and escape like sparrows from an inexhaustible nest.

Her applause is deafening. The people hang in the wings backstage, saucer-eyed, as eager over Florence as the folks out front.

Said With Flowers

Two grinning young Negroes in uniform of the theatre, bear down the aisle bunches of flowers, with bright foil around the stems. Florence leans over and takes them in her arms. She cracks a joke with the boys. The front rows laugh delightedly. * * She walks to the centre d looks around. She has personality * * * She seems to ponder. Then:

"Have you got * * * 'Nobody?' You know. It goes like this: Teedle-tee-tum-tum-tum. * * *"

And she skips sideways and flirts her fingers in the air, giving the key tune. Shrimp Jones waves his violin bow and nods and the saxophonists rummage for music.

Then the Clowns

She sings. The comedians come on. It is broad humor. But delicious for all that. These blackfaces know how to carry it off. Many jokes depend on excruciating exaggeration. Two comics threaten one another. One has an oversized rubber razor. The other has his pockets full of bricks. He produces them like magic. As he throws them a stagehand in the wings lets fall a weight. You see that the "brick" thrown from the stage was nothing more than a red rubber sponge. The comedians ring changes on the humor that lies in hyperbolical threats.

"I'm comin' over there. You can't stop me I'm comin' over there."

"I cain't stop you comin' . . . but I kin delay your depahture."

Or the threatener solemnly informs his antagonist that if he hits him he will starve to death befo' he stops bouncin'.

"I cawn't speak Ingleeshe," says one blackface, putting on an absurdly broad London accent. "An'," says the other, looking around soberly, "if I kin find a brick you shawn't."

Afterthought

And so on to the final curtain, the jazz band trumpeting away, with a blim-blim-blim and a tootle-pip-pip, till the squawking sounds vibrate the air into almost tangible shapes, large and dark and dancing, flinging their phantom arms about and shaking lewd hips, cakewalking in a great swirling orbit and now and then throwing back shining-dark phantasmagorical heads and grimacing at the stars. And something as old as Africa and as young as America claps strong hand and looses inextinguishable laughter.

PICKENS SEES HOW MOVIES ARE MADE

Says New De Mille Picture Will Be A Negro "Humoresque"

WILL NOT BE PROBLEM OR A HISTORY FILM

Visited All Of The Large Studios And Gets Jackie Coogan's Picture

Charleston's 'Big Boss' Tells Chicagoans All 'Bout' The Charleston

CHICAGO, Ill., Feb. 18—According to Tom Stoney, Mayor of Charleston, South Carolina, the "Charleston" will reunite the nation. He also declared that the Colored citizens of South Carolina were the original Charleston dancers. The Mayor said:

"The basic steps and rhythm were executed in our city many years before they were even dreamed of in the ball room dance," he said. "Year after year tourists visiting Charleston found entertainment in watching young Negroes on the waterfront giving their inimitable performance of the dance that, now modified, is the craze of the nation. After the close of the world war, many Negroes from the south moved to the north and emigrants from Charleston carried the characteristic folk dance to Harlem. Thence it spread to Broadway, and in its more graceful and pleasing form was taken up generally."

He was in Chicago in connection with the National Charleston contest.

Jackie Coogan sent me two of the latest photographs of himself. He is 10 years old now—getting to be a real man—and they say he is a real boy.

HOUSTON TEX POST
APRIL 25, 1926

Negro Composer to Present Operetta At City Auditorium

J. Berni Barbour, New York composer-pianist, has been in Houston four weeks, training and rehearing a cast and chorus of 200 people with whom he will present his Race Operetta, "The Arrival of the Negro" at City auditorium, May 1, at 8:15 p. m.

Barbour has just finished writing a descriptive, sentimental waltz ballad entitled "Heavenly Houston," which will have its first hearing at this performance.

The music score of this operetta is considered good. It shows the advancement in negro music from 1800 to the present time. Several of the old-time familiar spirituals and jubilee songs will be added to the music score, namely, "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," "Hand Me Down De Silver Trumpet, Gabriel," and one special number written by Barbour, entitled "Doan' Let Satan Git You on de Judgment Day."

A special section has been reserved for white citizens who are cordially invited to attend. More than 1000 whites attended this affair in Dallas.

Proceeds of this entertainment are for the benefit of Paul Quinn college.

Tickets will be on sale at the box office of the auditorium, April 28, 29, 30 and May 1, from 1 until 6 p. m.

GRAHAM HEADS THE DEPUTIES OF C. A. J.

J. A. Jackson, President, Makes Appointment

By WILLIAM PICKENS

LOS ANGELES—I had the privileges at Cecil B. De Mille's studio to discuss with B. Millhauser, superintendent of productions, his proposed plan to screen a section of Negro life—not a problem plan, or a history play, but a sort of Negro "Humoresque."

Just a sympathetic presentation of the Negro group life, such as has been done for other races. It is not to be a play of Negro-white relations, but a play of Negro life. Millhauser is an artist and a sympathetic human, and if he can carry out his idea, this will make the first great Negro picture, as it will be the first nationally distributed picture of Negro life. He has bought "Porgy" for a basis, and has preliminary contracts with Gilpin, Robeson, and other Negro actors. Geo Godfrey, the pugilist is making good as an actor in the Famous Players-Lasky studios.

Noah Thompson of the "Los Angeles Express" made connections for me to visit the picture studios at Culver City, and I had the company of his wife, himself, Mrs. Barr of the Urban League, and Clarence Matthews who used to play the ball game for Harvard University, and is now playing another game in the office of the United States Attorney General. We visted all of the studios and absorbed much first hand information of how it is done.

Sammy Graham was appointed Deputy of the Colored Actors' Union by the recently elected president, J. A. Jackson at a special executive session of the board of directors held in Washington last Wednesday.

Graham, who is a 33rd degree Mason, a deputy in the Order of Moses, and widely known owner of tabloid shows will head a re-organized force of eleven subordinates, wto of whom will be women, and five of whom, in the interests of greater efficiency, will be permanent residents of five strategic key cities on the T. O. B. A. circuit. One of these will be located in New York.

Inefficient To Go

Appointment of deputies is being withheld until a survey of the work of last year's incumbents has been completed, as no indolent or inefficient officer will be retained on the new list.

A second committee to conclude plans for Actors' Union Day was authorized by the board. Another committee to prepare for a Union picnic in or near Washington was also authorized.

Gaskins and Bowler, law firm, have been retained as general counsel for the Union.

C. A. U. ELECTS OFFICERS

The board of directors of the Colored Actors union held a session last Sunday that had been postponed for a month due to the absence of a quorum at the regular session scheduled for the third Sunday in April. The principal business before the board was the election of executive officers.

J. A. Jackson of the Washington Tribune staff, long known in the show business as "Billboard" Jackson, a name applied to him during his six years' service on the staff of the theatrical publication, The Billboard, who conducted the negotiations between the union and the directors of the Theater Owners Booking association at its annual meeting in Chattanooga, was elected president of the union.

Telfair Washington, who has been secretary of the C. A. U., since the inception of the organization, was unanimously re-elected to that office. S. H. Dudley, treasurer and business manager, was likewise re-elected by a unanimous vote.

Eugene Hooten, J. Henri Bowman and Sam Robinson were elected vice presidents.

The directors voted a salary of $50 per year for the secretary, and passed a resolution providing that the retiring president, Jules McGarr, together with the incumbent and the reelected manager and secretary, should be made life members exempt from dues.

Seven of the board of directors elected for this year were in attendance at the meeting. Bart Kennett, chief deputy as well as director, called the meeting to order, Henri Bowman invoked the blessing, and the session was called to order in the union offices in the Midcity building.

Other directors answering to the roll call were Sammy Graham, Telfair Washington, S. H. Dudley, Garnet Warbington and J. A. Jackson. The absentees were Jules McGarr, Al Wells and Wesley Wilson, whose shows are on tour and playing distant points, and Eugene Hooten, whose home is in Baltimore.

The meeting adjourned to call in executive session on Wednesday afternoon for consideration of plans for the annual ramble, the appointment of deputies and of standing committees together with such other business as may properly come before the directors.

The broad gauge views of the problems of the profession, and the seriousness with which the union officers are surveying the difficulties that beset their calling was reflected in the complete harmony with which the session was characterized.

NEWARK N J STAR
MAY 12, 1926

The Way of the World

BY GROVE PATTERSON

COLORED cafe entertainers seem to have reached a new peak of popularity in New York. There is a mid-town wail that Harlem cabarets are getting the play. Pleasure seekers go where they can yell "Hey! Hey!" and someone will leap into the epileptic convulsions of the Charleston. In the Black Belt the gaudy cafes have doubled in the past year. The patronage is mostly white watching "high yaller" strutting and listening to the senseless yackey-hickey-doodle tunes. Most of the entertainers are waiters who double as performers. Also cigarette girls.

Even downtown it is not unusual for colored waiters suddenly to hurl down their trays, gather at the piano and burst into song. The Charleston craze and the appeal of the haunting spiritual songs are the biggest contributing factors in what someone has called the negroidal nuance.

The eminent M. Belasco added his fuel with a play of mostly all colored performers who essay the happy-go-lucky roles of New York's famous San Juan Hill. Travelers to aPris are finding the high spots of Montmartre presided over by American darkeys.

The Charleston, which was considered a passing fad like the turkey trot, has really gained a new fervor. Dancing masters say it is about the only dance in which the public is interested. It represents youth bursting at every pore—searching for life and its meaning.

Several drug stores are exhibiting a patented "Charleston liniment" for those hardy souls who have reached discreet years but who succumb to the new dancing madness. A Pullman porter recently quit his job to teach the Charleston and tripled his income.

Even the great Metropolitan has exhibited an experiment in light toed strutting and Charleston capers. A syndicate is being formed to have a circuit of eastern theaters presenting colored musical revues—changed weekly like burlesque. So it goes.

Perhaps this is just a nonsensical era that will pass. But there doesn't seem much hope when such a lisping songs as this becomes a rage:

I'll be with you when the odorouth narthithhuth
Thweetly tell that Thpring ith onth more with uth;
Then whisper "yeth" and with your bletthed kithets,
O, promise me that you will be my mithhuth.

Theatrical managers in the hope of inspiring fresh interest in their productions often announce "summer editions." This seems to be brought about by putting cool white coverings over the chairs. "Spring editions" consist of putting a flower pot in the lobby.

I know a criminal lawyer whose contention is that 99 per cent of the people are honest. Recently I have had two persons—a lady and a gentleman—tell me of giving taxicab drivers $100 bills in mistake for dollar bills. In each case the bills were returned within three hours.

When Stanley Baldwin, premier of Great Britain, starts a campaign against the slums of great cities he is getting down to the fundamentals of human failure and unhappiness. We have a lot of little stop-gap legislation. We do a lot of floor-mopping. There is too little getting down to cases and causes. Bad social conditions, crime and failure breed in slums. Environment will not make good people or great people, but it will give average people a chance to develop what they have. Environment will at least help to keep a great many boys and girls out of the criminal ranks.

Bring Out Latent Genius in His Race, Cherished Ambition of Paul Robeson, Celebrated Negro Actor and Singer

Ithaca N Y
APRIL 23, 1926

Negro art has a very definite contribution to make to the world, a unique racial development which is just beginning to find itself, averred Paul Robeson, celebrated negro baritone who sang at the Lyceum Theater last night, in his hotel room today. He and his concert associate, Lawrence Brown, were preparing to leave for Chicago where they will appear in recitals of negro spirituals.

Mr. Robeson is a man of imposing presence and interesting intelligence, who likes to sit down and talk about the future of his race. It is significant that individuals of the negro race who have gained prominence for themselves appear to think more of helping their race to find its place in the sun than of achieving personal fame:

Mr. Robeson voiced the same ambition. He believes confidently that his race has something to give the art of civilization which no other race has given, and he cherishes the hope that he may help to bring out this latent genius which lies in his race.

The negro singer was graduated from Rutgers University in 1919, after having achieved note as a tackle and end on the Rutgers football team. Thence he went to Columbia University and obtained a law degree. The practice of law as an assistant in a large legal firm in New York, however, did not hold him long. The stage door opened, and he entered.

Robeson first had the possibilities of negro art borne in upon him when he was cast in the role of Emperor Jones in Eugene O'Neill's famous play. "O'Neill seems to have caught more than any other writer the true negro spirit," he said. "I could change hardly a word of the lines. He has transmitted to paper the real rhythm of the negro dialect."

Sees New Field Opening Up

The actor-singer sees an entirely new field opening up in art, to be developed by negroes. He believes that the most lasting contribution he can make to his race, more than any material achievement, is as an exponent of its art. "Every race in history has been measured by its artists more than by its professional men," he declared.

He is greatly optimistic of the future of the African race, his one misgiving being lest it develop its native genius too far in too short a time and kill it by over-representation. The very recent advance of negroes into drama, literature, music, and painting he looks upon as a no less promising sign than the tolerance and appreciation exhibited towards their art by the whites. Negro, artists are in great demand. He himself has been offered contracts by almost every large theatrical producer in New York.

The first negro actor of note on the cosmopolitan stage was Gilpin, who made his debut with Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones." Robeson followed along in the same role a short time later, and now playwrights are busy turning out plays with negro roles and the public is clamoring for more. "Emperor Jones" had a phenomenal run and is still being revived annually in New York.

Robeson's primary interest is with the theater, believing his greatest opportunity lies in that direction. Secondarily, he is devoted to the advancement of negro music as exemplified in the folk-songs and spirituals. They have a depth of feeling scarce approximated by the music of any other race. He was surprised at the reception which a Paris audience gave him when he sang spirituals for them.

This is the first concert tour of Robeson and Brown, having started this year immediately upon Robeson's return from playing "Emperor Jones" in London. Next fall, he returns to the metropolitan stage in Jim Tully's new play "Jungle Born."

Overcoming Handicap

"My race is still under the handicap of racial prejudice, but I believe that is being gradually overcome," he said. "We are at least not the only race to suffer in that respect. It is by proving our artistic capacity that we will be best recognized."

In the field of art, also, he observed, the sting of racial prejudice is far less marked than in the industries and professions. Therefore it is a more open field for the negro. He related his experience with the law profession in New York. He entered a white firm as a clerk, under the sponsorship of one of the partners. The other partner could not get used to the idea of a negro about the office, the clients were puzzled, the stenographers disliked to take dictation from him. Though he had the example of a negro judge in Chicago and other eminent colored lawyers to spur him on, he saw that the road was hard and would not be likely to lead far.

Then the stage opened to him and he resigned his legal position to accept what he saw as a bigger opportunity to serve his race. In a remarkably short time, he has come into prominence in the theatrical firmament.

Theatrical - 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.,

Winston-Salem, N. C.,
Journal
JUL 25 1926

The Personality of the Negro Poignantly Portrayed

Lonesome Road, Six Plays for the Negro Theatre, by Paul Green; McBride, New York.

This following critical resume is written by Barrett H. Clark, and appears as the introduction to the play:

For the first time, so far as I am aware, a dramatist has taken a negro theme almost as old as our literature, and made it live in our dramatic form. Mr. Green knows his negroes, and like John Synge, that other artist who created literature as well as drama out of the folk idion, he has made use of the commonest words and phrases, giving them new and surprising terms, and making them a living speech.

The next negro play was not written until several one-actors of varying merit about whites had been turned out, some of them, like The Lord's Will, with good stuff in them, and others like Round and Round, which he regarded merely as experimental exercises.

The second of his characteristic negro plays is "The Prayer Meeting." It seems strange that this is the first successful attempt to introduce into our theatre the full-blooded negro, the healthy animal, neither a downright villain nor a dreamy Uncle Tom's Cabin sort of sentimentalist. Mr. Green has learned from observation and experience that the negro, living under the white man's civilization, has not had a pleasant time of it. The white man has given him religion, under the influence of which he often becomes a savage again; he has given him liquor, business methods, the vote, ambition, education; yet the negro, only half assimilating what is theoretically his rightful heritage, finds himself up against the white man's prohibitions and prejudices.

But the Prayer Meeting is primarily a work of art, a human and not a sociological document. Mr. Green may care a great deal about the plight of the negro, but his concern is primarily with human beings as individuals. This play is a marvelous exhibition of the vast fund of devilry in the soul of the negro; it is a revelation of unsounded depths in the soul of the black mana. With the instinct of a true dramatist, Mr. Green has taken a situation which is ready to hand. The Negro Prayer Meeting is a drama in itself, and I cannot understand why it has not been used before in a play. In this ready-made plot, the dramatist has simply set in motion a group of well-realized characters. He really needs no story at all, in the usual sense of the term, and no theatrical trickery.

The Prayer Meeting is a study in negro psychology, with none of the disturbing elements introduced by white civilization. Sam Tucker skillfully introduces the tragic theme of the negro in relation to the white man. The same theme is more tragically developed in the one-act version of In Abraham's Bosom. The negro's effort to better himself by means of education is the basis of the tragic episode. It would be so easy to sentimentalize over Abraham's plight, to regard the play as a document; but there is nothing in it besides the human struggle. In treating the problems of the American negro, Mr. Green knows instinctively that the greatest problems are those the human being must face as an individual.

What he scarcely more than touched upon in the one-act play, he has recently developed in an epic tragedy. The full-length work, also known as In Abraham's Bosom, not yet produced or published, is one of the most beautiful and tragic modern plays I have ever read. The character of Abraham is developed through six scenes, each depicting a crisis in the hero's heartbreaking struggle to develop his limited mental powers. With the aid of a white man he is at first enabled to do some studying, and even succeeds in opening a small school for negroes. But every time he seems on the point of success, he finds himself thwarted. Now, his tragedy is not altogether that of the negro in a white man's world; as a matter of fact, his failure lies ultimately within himself, attributable to his racial and individual shortcomings.

In this play there is no effort to solve the problem, it is Mr. Green's business simply to state it in terms of humanity. Abraham remains a pitiful figure, held down by the limitations imposed upon him by nature and by man. Far from offering any solution in this or in his other work, Mr. Green is over modest. "Doubtless," he says in the preface of this book, readers of these plays will object that they are not generally representative of the negro race. They are not meant to be. Specifically, the chief concern here is with the more tragic and uneasy side of negro life as it has exhibited itself to my notice through a number of years on or near a single farm" in the coastal plain of North Carolina. Not long after writing this, he added in a personal letter that he "grew up on a farm and for twenty-three years saw nothing else." But what Mr. Green has seen and experienced, he can interpret. He may have no more than a few acres of the county of which he was born, but from that limited area he has been able to draw the inspiration that animates his plays, and to strike in them a universal chord. If he should never again leave his native state he would still have enough material to keep him busy for a long lifetime. One's knowledge of humanity, of course, is not a matter of travel, but of intution.

Of the remaining negro plays in Lonesome Road, one—Your Fiery Furnace, is another full length drama In Abraham's Bosom. The other two, The Hot Iron and The End of the Row, stand at the apex of Mr. Green's achievement. In The End of the Row we have Abraham's problem again, of the negro who wants to better his condition, only in this case it is further complicated by the problem of sex. Here a young and attractive woman strives, with the help of a white man, to improve herself, but the man is anxious also to possess the girl, though he is also interested in her education. The incident in which the girl's tragedy is built takes place during the rest hour in the hot cotton fields. There is no violence in this quiet scene, only the helpless and baffling struggle of a human being. Lalie is forced in the end to give in to the proposals of the white man, and though she loves him, she has made a heroic sacrifice.

The Hot Iron is one of the most affecting one-act plays I know. With the simplist imaginable dramatic elements and scarcely an episode by way of plot, the dramatist has animated his characters with the breath of life. By the intensity of his art Mr. Green has endowed the man and the woman with the sufferings and longing of mankind. I forget in reading it that the characters are negroes from a part of the world I know little about, but it makes no difference! I am made to understand the people.

Mr. Green stands alone among our younger playwrights as a man who can touch with equal skill the lighter and more sentimental side of life, and the tragedy of it. There are two plays, not in Lonesome Road or The Lord's Will, quite as good as in their way, though not so somber in mood, as the best in Lonesome Road. The Man Who Died at Twelve O'Clock is a delicious bit of horseplay, genuine, imaginative, poetic. A young couple frighten them into givng them the money that rightfully belongs to them, in order that they may get married and set up housekeeping.

Mr. Green has created a memorable figure in Uncle January, a superstitious old fellow who thinks he has died and come to life again.

In Aunt Mahaly's Cabin is described as a negro melodrama. Two negroes have killed a white man and seek refuge in a deserted cabin once occupied by the witch woman Aunt Mahaly. The scene is reminiscent of The Emperor Jones, but it is elaborated by the introduction of a world of demonology in the shape of ghostly apparitions. One of the murderers kills the other, but not until he is himself mortally wounded in the fight. In his dying moments there passes before his over-wrought brain a panorama of all the mysterious practices of Aunt Mahaly. In Aunt Mahaly's Cabin is not such b study of fear as a grotesque fantasy on negro themes. There is far less concious art in it than there is in O'Neill's play and more of the folk element. It is an elaborate pageant of dramatized folklure.

The last of the negro play is probably the best known of all Mr. Green's work, The No 'Count Boy. Different from anything else he has done, this idyl is a most appealing and delightful play. To say that it is somewhat reminiscent of Synge means little, for the language and the characters are altogether Mr. Green's own. This is the story of a dreamy boy who nearly succeeds in carrying off the fiancee of a practical-minded young negro, simply by playing the mouth organ and telling her of his (wholly imaginary) travels in distant cities. There is a wealth of poetry in the little scene, and rich characterization.

Mr. Green's latest play, Quare Medicine and The Field God, show the dramatist's efforts to widen his horizon and vary his style. But since both these plays, the first in one, and the other in three acts, are in course of revision, it is not necessary to do more than state that they are well written, solidly constructed plays dealing with the whites of Eastern North Carolina.

So far Mr. Green has shown an extraordinary adaptability in form and style; he can write tragedy and comedy, drab realism and highly imaginative fantasy. Like all young writers he has his literary preferences, authors who have influenced him for better or for worse. Hardy and Synge and ONeill seem to predominate, but since Mr. Green knows this, there perhaps is less danger of conscious imitation than there would be in a less original artist.

I feel that his greatest gifts are his institctive talent for seizing upon a dramatic situation, his poetic imagination, and his intuitive knowledge of character. I believe that poetic imagination is what our theatre stands most in need of. We have skilled technicians a-plenty, and in O'Ueill a great artist of many aspects. But as yet we have no genuine folk dramatist besides Paul Green. If he were at this moment to cease writing he would be entitled to a place of honor in the development of the American drama. But he is only beginning. Was any beginner ever better equipped?

Only Race Girl In German Revue Of 300 Is Sensation

RUTH BAYTON

Well-known American theatrical girl, who is now playing a three months' engagement with the Theater des Westens Revue in Berlin, Germany, is a big success "doing the Charleston and looking pretty."

Miss Bayton sent this information to W. R. Bain of New York, along with programs of the revue, listing her name prominently and carrying her picture, as well as several clippings from German papers praising her work. She is the only race girl in the revue, which is composed of 300 girls. Miss Bayton will return to New York in November.

Local Girl Returns From Europe After Brilliant Stage Success

Aurelia Wheeldin, Well Known in Community, Recounts Foreign Experiences; Will Go Back to Europe.

You girls who love to dance and who have sorrowfully deplored certain handicaps or physical drawbacks before the secret mirrors in your boudoirs—

You nimble-footed maids who have sighed for careers upon the stage, with success and trips to Europe—

You embryo Pavlowas, who are seeking only a chance to display your terpsichorean prowess—meet herewith a local girl whose story is even as your own aspirations, a girl who has grown up even as you within the environs of this middle-western town and who has just completed a brilliant period upon the stage in Europe.

Miss Aurelia Wheeldin, 682 Carroll Ave., daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. L. Wheeldin, is the heroine of the story.

Left for New York.

In October, 1924, Miss Wheeldin left St. Paul for New York City, where she had been offered a position. At the time that she left home, Miss Wheeldin had no especial desire to go upon the stage, nor any intention of doing so. She intended merely to make her home in New York.

Miss Aurelia Wheeldin

Having accepted a position with a theatrical company as secretary to the group, she sailed for Europe with the company the last part of October.

Begins to Dance.

In Paris, where the "Tea for Two Girls" had a contract for six months at the newly opened and justly famous Moulin Rouge, Miss Wheeldin was asked by the manager of the company to accept a dancing part which she consented to do. There were at that time nine girls and one man in the company.

"Just to keep busy," said Miss Wheeldin with a smile, "I not only danced, but continued to handle the heavy secretarial work as well.

Forms Team.

"When the scheduled six months' contract engagement was ended, the captain of the company, Miss Emma Maitland of Virginia, and I, formed the team of Maitland and Wheeldin and started a tour of Europe.

"Italy, France, Belgium, Holland and Switzerland we covered, with repeated engagements in nearly every place. Several times we were entertained by royalty.

"Just before leaving for home, we made a picture, "Theodore E Socio," in Rome. We came by Paris and sailed directly for New York, reaching home August 11."

When asked about the treatment accorded colored Americans in Europe, Miss Wheeldin pointed out that the sentiment was very friendly. She added that all the while she had been abroad, she had never once encountered an instance of discrimination or insult because of color.

This winter Miss Wheeldin will return to New York, where she will meet Miss Maitland, her partner. Together they will accept one of many attractive engagements they have been offered. Later they plan to go to Africa to make a picture of the African as he is, both in the civilized and the semi-barbarous state.

Miss Wheeldin received her education in St. Paul. Before leaving the city, she had been very active in Sunday school work and in the social life of the community.

Theatrical — 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

THE COLORED SHOW FIELD

NEW YORK CITY VARIETY
DECEMBER 30, 1925

In retrospect the year 1925 has been one on the whole very copisetic, a word which to the colored professionals means satisfactory, all to the merry or financially and otherwise to the good. In prospect the colored show field, and this takes in all its varied branches, augurs well. All preceding seasons are expected to take a very back seat in comparison. To quote one of the most successful of the Negro showmen, it is a season that will be "jam up."

The biggest advancement perhaps has been in burlesque, where the colored companies point with exultant pride to the boxoffice returns as the best and most conclusive proof that Negro entertainers, as well as the black and tan chorines, have accomplished more as a house draw than many of the established white companies.

Throughout the season Variety has from time to time given the colored shows and those using mixed personnels in burlesque full credit for their box office triumphs and have quoted figures showing what they have drawn at different stands. Every time Variety ran a story about big grosses some of these shows were doing there was an air of elation among the colored theatrical folks that could not be missed.

In the dramatic productions it has been a yes and no season so far, with New York not stacking up so well where white patronage was depended upon to send a show into the hit column. However, the season is still young for a colored show and one or two may yet be launched in the downtown Broadway section.

Anderson and Green

The season brought out several striking facts which were never before emblazoned on the horizon. Not since the day, some four years ago, when Charles Gilpin created the memorable role of Emperor Jones in the play of that name and which later was so capably played by another of the race's best known actors, Paul Robeson, has any play brought a colored thespian into the limelight like the one that lauded Doe Doe Green.

When "Appearances" was produced in the Frolic theatre atop the Amsterdam, the greatest interest was centered in its author, Garland Anderson. This colored man by sheer perseverance alone had accomplished what many white playwrights had failed to do; he at least had landed his play for production in New York.

Mr. Anderson had been a bell hop on the western coast. He wrote the play while answering calls and later through the help of Al Jolson and others finally reached New York.

While it was short-lived, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Green were the gainers thereby. The former received oodles of notices and interviews and his speech the opening night was made the center of a number of favorable notices. But Mr. Green copped the lion's share of praise and this was all the more distinctive through it being a mixed cast presenting the play.

As far as the colored theatrical world was concerned "Appearances" established Mr. Green as one negro actor who could act. It gave him a chance and the critics were not slow to bestow signal praise.

For some time Mr. Robeson has been recognized as an international favorite and he has been most of the season acting in London. Mr. Gilpin, unable to find another vehicle as profitable and important as "Emperor Jones," has been most of the year in vaudeville, presenting an act that received its biggest returns in the T. O. B. A. houses. (T. O. B. A. is the Theatre Owners' Booking Association which handles the attractions for nearly all the colored theatres throughout the country.)

This same T. O. B. A. has been largely responsible for many a Negro professional's start in theatricals. For years it has given flourish to dramatic and musical stocks (tabs they are best known) and to vaudevillians.

In looking over the past and present performances of dramatic companies the names of such colored players as Abbie Mitchell, Cleo Desmond, Sid Kirkpatrick, Laura Bowman, Ida Anderson, Evelyn Ellis, Link Scott, Anita Bush, Evelyn Preer, Lawrence Chenault and Andrew Bish[illegible]tind. These are only a hand[illegible]n, to be explicit, but they are sufficient to say these names are all revered and held up as being the class perhaps of the traveling colored repertoire troupes.

Several are not so active today, yet the majority are still treading the boards of the Negro theatres and adding fresh laurels to their stage wreaths. Several are among the later day personnel of Negro thespians.

Popular Players

The most popular of the colored dramatic people sprang from such rep organizations as the Lafayette Players and the Lafayette Bishop Players, so on and so forth. And it is such troupes that are still alive now and drawing appreciative audiences in the T. O. B. A. houses.

Even the venerable and versatile Link Scott is down San Antonio way, his dramatic stock changing shows twice a week and doing business. And he can keep on to his last days drawing crowds and not once having to worry about playing New York. Such is the power of the T. O. B. A.

However, repeated efforts to establish a permanent colored dramatic organization in New York have failed; this due perhaps to the demand among the race for musical shows, vaudeville with bands and cabaret shows.

Today there is no show like "Shuffle Along" or "Runnin' Wild" in New York, yet the principals of those shows are elsewhere, making good. Such standard colored entertainers as Miller and Lyles, with White's "Scandals" on tour, and Sissle and Blake, now abroad, don't have to worry about heading their own colored outfits.

Throughout the country there are quite a number of colored traveling aggregations, musical tabs and minstrel companies, that work week after week, and apparently are chalking up returns on the right side. Many of these outfits will never reach any of the eastern houses catering to Negroes this season, yet they will keep right on working up to the end of the season. Some of the companies are in white belts where Negro show troupes are given full consideration as to the entertainment appraisal. Some are playing to the coast and back. Reports as a whole are satisfactory.

Credit must be given to the apparent advancement of things theatrical along the T. O. B. A. circuit. Some years ago the general admission was 10-20. Today those prices have shot up to 88-99. Acts playing the T. O. B. A. receive at least 10 full weeks with others dependent upon booking contingencies. With the desire of Negroes to have stage and screen entertainment, more theatres are being built or operated for their amusement.

Reasons for T. O. B. A.

Ask any Negro professional what he knows about the T. O. B. A. and he will quickly answer that there are several reasons why the T. O. B. A. continues to thrive and flourish.

Among these reasons are the Baileys, Tom and Joe. It is the Bailey houses like the 81 (that is the only name it is known by) in Atlanta and Macon that do a corking business. The Baileys are white, yet they have spent most of their lives in Atlanta among the colored folks.

Another reason is Sam H. Dudley, colored actor, comedian, author, manager, booker, organizer, producer, etcetera and twice in the same place. Dudley is one of the most characteristic figures in colored showdom. While there are many spokes to the wheel that makes the T. O. B. A. the powerful Negro booking association, the biggest spoke is this same Mr. Dudley.

In the conduct of the T. O. B. A. one of the outstanding figures is John T. Gibson, colored theatre owner of Philadelphia. He is reputed a millionaire or more, his fortunes accumulated in the show business. This seems all the more remarkable when it is recalled that this same Mr. Gibson was once a struggling butcher with no idea that he would ever stop cutting meat to drive a truck loaded with greenbacks to the bank.

Mr. Gibson owns the Standard and the Dunbar, with the Standard in Philly being Gibson's ace moneygetter. Then there is Chintz Moore, also colored, down in Houston. He is another who has made the T. O. B. A. connection pay well and constantly.

As a rule a T. O. B. A. house will play any kind of a colored attraction as long as it attracts. That is why the vaudeville policy can be shelved momentarily when a dramatic or musical tab comes along.

Florence Mills is considered about the highest-priced colored woman on the stage today. The consideration may be accepted for all it is worth yet Miss Mills is under the personal direction, management and agency direction of a white man, Lew Leslie, who gives her so much and, according to the rules of the game, draws down the remainder.

Bessie Smith, Highest Salary

A half dozen of the best informed colored men and women in the show business were asked as to the person considered drawing down the most money weekly among the colored feminine stage workers. The answer was unanimous, a woman who has never played in a white house in her life, Bessie Smith.

Miss Smith is known as a T. O. B. A. "single," whose straight salary has been $800, not including her takings from record making. Miss Smith is known to have obtained as high as $1,000 for a record and it was not long ago she switched her mechanical affection from the Okeh to the Ajax.

Now there is another Smith, Mamie, who gets more money for her act, yet Miss Mamie carries a band and its personnel must be paid out of the amount asked for the turn. Miss Bessie has no band and the $800 goes to her alone.

There are other turns, especially teams, that receive salaries for T. O. B. A. engagements that would rival those on the big time vaudeville circuit.

All of the Negro picture houses in New York are doing a profitable business. Within the past few months such standard colored theatres as the Douglas and Roosevelt have been able to play a much better grade of screen attractions.

'LULA BELLE' NEW BELASCO PLAY OPENS

Neither Decent Presentation of Race or Artistic Opportunity Afforded in Piece

Newspaper Review Contrasted with Negro Critic's Impressions

David Belasco's "Lulu Belle" for which a group of Negro artists have been taking especial training since last August, and the opening of which was heralded as a creditable production with a mixed cast that would present the Negro artist in its big chance, opened at the Broad Street Theatre, Philadelphia, on January 26. Reviews of the show conflict greatly. They agree however, on the stupendousness of the production. The show remain in the Quaker City for two weeks.

Tho much heralded as a co-star in publicity through colored papers Evelyn Preer has been relegated to a very minor place when one considers her great reputation.

The critic upon the Philadelphia Ledger comments upon the show in the following manner.

Belasco Play, With Lenore Ulric, Has Remarkable Production but Little Drama

The premiere performance last night at the Broad Street Theatre of David Belasco's production of "Lulu Belle" has perhaps greater importance as an item of news interest than as a subject of dramatic criticism.

The audience, the nature of the production and the general circumstances surrounding the "first night" were facts of paramount importance. The

play by Edward Sheldon and Charles McArthur proved to be submerged by the exterior trappings and the hullabaloo of the occasion.

"Lulu Belle" ranks among the greatest, if it is not actually the greatest, of Mr. Belasco's presentations from the standpoint of staging and settings. The first act, a street scene in the colored quarter of Harlem, rivals anything of its kind ever offered on the stage and the direction of the 100 or more minor characters, some of whom peer from fourth-story windows in the solid and substantial looking tenements, is an achievement almost past understanding. Again in the third act, which represents the interior of the Elite Grotto, a colored cabaret also in Harlem, the stage is a riot of color and action, with a jazz band, a densely packed mob of dancers and scores of extras, each one of whom seems to have a definite part in the scheme of things.

It would be idle to speculate on the amount of money Mr. Belasco has spent on his latest play. The Paris boudoir settings of the last act, which might well have been conventional and inexpensive, rivaled the gorgeous pictures of Mr. Ziegfeld and Mr. White. It wasn't necessary, but, of course, it had its effect.

The cast, with its fifteen or so principals, all white, and its tremendous ensemble of minor characters, all played by Negroes, must have presented a terrific problem to Belasco in the rehearsals. Scenes that call for a babble of conversation, which must serve as a background to, but never drown out, the important dialogue, suffered a natural first-night diffuseness and hesitation, and even some of the principals stumbled constantly in their lines, but nothing else could have been expected.

Lenore Ulric, in the name role, has as "juicy" a part as any actress has ever been called upon to play, not excepting Camille or Hedda Gabbler. The dusky Harlem siren, who led men to their ruin and then taunted them, is a part that runs the gamut of every conceivable emotion and phase of character. Miss Ulric is called upon to Charleston, to sing jazz ballads, to display various brands of "vamping," and finally to be choked by her faithful but rejected lover across the silk coverlets of her canopied bed. Pyrotechnically, the part and its performance by Miss Ulric is sure to cause a sensation wherever it is seen. But when all is said and done, it is her remarkable personality that puts "Lulu Belle" across, not any great tour de force of dramatic acting.

The real honors, in this respect, go to Henry Hull, as the one man who sincerely loved Lulu, bore her jibes and her unfaithfulness, took a terrible beating on her account, and finally crossed the Atlantic in a cattle boat to find her in Paris, a reigning favorite, and kill her. This performance should go far to put Mr. Hull among the leading young actors on the stage today. His is the high spot of the play.

John Harrington, like Hull blacked up, and playing a jack Johnson-ish sort of a prize-ring champ, is the third actor who stands out above the welter of scenery, supers and general production gorgeousness.

The play is frank, sometimes sensational, but any objection that may be taken to it will be based on the general theme rather than to any particular scenes or bits of dialogue. There are two bedroom scenes and Miss Ulric displays her charms quite frankly, but neither of these facts are to be taken too seriously.

Mr. Belasco came forth for one of his famous and traditional curtain speeches last night, apologizing for the absence of the authors. This is one time, however, when the right man took the credit. As a drama, "Lulu Belle" is attenuated, often overdrawn and disappointing. The Belasco production helps hide that fact.

Thus it is that a white critic views "Lulu Belle."

Another View

Contrast this with the following criticism provided especially for the readers of the Tribune by a Negro who is a keen observer, a trained theatrical man and an intelligent race-conscious citizen. His observations are presented for the benefit of those who would know the truth about the production from one whose point of view is as ours would be.

"Here goes the dope: A true and unbiased affair on my part. I've dealt with the below just as it appears and appeals to me. Belasco's "Lulu Belle" had its opening at the Broad Street Theatre, January 26 to a packed house, including an honored guest, Mae Murray, a movie star. Belasco is here in person and appears on the stage with Miss Ulric, at her closing curtain, after the last scene. The show is, of course, well directed: stage settings, fine; effects, great; cast, both colored and white, could not be excelled. Every individual is well directed even down to the lookers-on.

"The book creates a question. A typical lown-down Negro story has been presented, showing the worse side of the Negro life in Harlem. Not giving credit to our well conducted cabarets, and our fine people who carry themselves as well as the white race, have not had a chance in this story. It is evident that Belasco tried to get real Harlem nite-life, but evidentally he did not get any further than 59th Street, as the cabaret shows a knock-'em-down-and-drag-'em-out atmosphere, with a brawl which ends in a stabbing match.

"Miss Ulric takes a role of a high yellow Harlem girl, or street woman, I should say. She gives a fierce burlesque of the colored girl, featuring the lowest type. Lines very suggestive; language, terrible; gives the white man a fearful conception of colored society. The colored players in this show, are merely used for atmosphere—a general back-ground, bringing out a volume of illiteracy among our people.

"The evening papers gave it a better write-up, and spoke of Miss Ulric only and said nothing about the supporting colored cast. For data, the first scene is a crap game, which a white Irish cop raids, followed up by a fight between Evelyn Preer and Ulric which is disgraceful, in the light that it throws on our Race. The few lines that the colored actors have in the play, deal with nothing but low and degrading situations.

"The plot of the play deals with Miss Ulric falling in love with a Frenchman; an exact sequel to the Rhinelander case. One thing, Ulric dances and sings the blues better than any colored woman I've ever heard and Charlestons out of this world. Her characterization of a high-yellow girl, as they call her in the play, is great. Henry Hull, her support, makes an excellent high-yellow boy, as he is also called. He puts over the southern brogue great.

"At the end of the play, the high-yellow falls for a Frenchman, and he takes her to Paris, as a common law wife. There, she is killed by her American Negro lover who has followed her to Paris, and that ends the show. A morbid ending.

"It is evident that Belasco wanted the type of Negro that is a detriment to our Race, and he never sought the better class of society."

There is little doubt that the show will be sent into New York for an early engagement, and that it will later appear in the better road houses of a big circuit. To us, as a Race, it seems that the greater the success of the show, the greater the degradation and humiliation for our group. It is very obviously a production of which we may not feel at all proud.

The Negro contingent was first interested by Ann Wolter, head of the Ethiopian Art school, and it was heralded as a great chance for Negroes to show their art. It is indeed a source of grief to find that again the talents of our group have been used solely for the purpose of advancing the white stars whose newest characterization is given momentum by the publicity the big essentially Negro show. Belasco could have been forgiven either the sordidness of the story, or the obscuring of the artists work, but hardly for both. Of course, the show was not produced for Negro approval, and we must be content to rail at an unkindly fate solaced alone by the big total of dollars that the actors gain in a Broadway show, under such auspices.

The program is as follows:

Characters

The names starred (*) are known Negro actors and actresses. There may be others not known to the writer from memory.

(In the order of their appearance)

Geranium Monroe ....Altomay Jones
Stella La Vergne .....Jean Ward
Lovie Bowtelle .....Mildred Hall
*Mrs. Bowtelle ...Elizabeth Williams
*Mrs. Monroe ...Nellie R. Reynolds
*Mrs. Frisbie, Fannie Belle DeKnight
Butch Cooper..... John Harrington
*Shorty Noyes ...Tammany Young
*Mabel De Witt .....Ollie Burgoyne
*Ada May Ramsey ..Loraine Hunter
*Ruby Lee .....Evelyn Preer
Ivy Whiteside ...Marguerite Wyatt
*Roscoe .....W. S. Bell
*Lew .....James Jackson
*Herman .....Edward Thompson
*Royal Williams ..William Taliaferro
*Mrs. Royal Williams .Edna Thrower
Eugene Frisbie .....Smothers Ward
Mt. Vernon Jackson, George Callender
*A Bartender .....Samuel Bolen
*Mrs. Jackson .....Mattie V. Wilkes
Elmer Jackson .Oswald Edinborough
George Randall .....Henry Hull
Mrs. George Randall ...Sybil Bryant
Walter Randall .....Thomas Trisvan
Violet Randall .....Margaret Petty
Clarence De Voe .....Seifert Pile
Brother Staley ....J. Louis Johnson
Sister Sally .....Virgie Winfield
Sister Blosom ....Annie Rhinelander
Lulu Belle .....Lenore Ulric

Theatrical - 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

"SAMMY" GETS NEW MOVIE CONTRACT

To Be Featured In Series Of Comedies With Ben Turpin's Nephew

HAS TOURED T. O. B. A. CIRCUIT TWO YEARS

Received $250 Weekly Under Old Contract Before Leaving

HOLLYWOOD. (P. C. N. B.) —Frederick Ernest Morrison, better known as "Sunshine Sammy," will discontinue his vaudeville tour and return to Hollywood as the juvenile comedian in a series of 12 two reel comedies.

Jean Francis DeVillard, the Indian capitalist producer has signed a contract [illegible] as the juvenile comedian in a series of "Messenger Boy" comedies starring Tommy Turpin, nephew of cross-eyed Ben.

Mira Adoree, sister of Renee of "The Big Parade", who recently arrived in this country after starring in a French farce throughout the capitals of Europe, will be featured opposite [illegible]. Spencer Irving will handle the megaphone while Bill Thompson will grind the camera. The cast will include Eve Conrad, Sheldon Lewis, Sunshine Sammy, Spec O'Donnell and Gibson Gowland, star of Stronheim's "Greed."

To a representative of this paper it was announced that Sammy may later be starred in a series of comedies after the completion of the "Messenger Boy" series. Sammy's return to Hollwood ends his two year tour of the colored vaudeville houses under the T. O. B. A. circuit.

An Experienced Trouper

Ernest entered the picture business in 1915 as a co-star with Baby Marie Osborne in a series of feature length Pathe comedy dramas. Fatty Arbuckle used him in the "Sheriff" which attracted the attention of Hal Roach. Under the Roach banner Ernest became internationally famous in support of Harold Lloyd and Snub Pollard. Upon Llyod's rise to stardom the "Our Gang" comedy team of youngsters was organized composed of Mickey Daniels (Freckles) Jacky Condon (Towhead); and Ernest Morrison (Sunshine Sammy) as the original cast. Later, three more were added, Joe Cobb (Fatty); Mary Kornman (Mary) and Allen Clay Hoskins, (Farina).

Was Earning $250 Per Week

It was said that Ernest's salary was advanced from time to time until it reached the maximum of $250 per week under his Roach contract. Dissatisfaction upon the part of his parents over his salary and publicity resulted in Sammy's leaving Roach and entering vaudeville. His salary under Roach was the highest salary paid to any colored screen actor steadily employed in pictures, with but one single exception.

TO PRESENT PLAY OF NEGRO RURAL LIFE

NEW YORK, ———

"Goophered," a play with music dealing with Negro life in South Carolina, will be presented at a theatre in Harlem during the latter part of this month, according to an announcement from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. The text of the play was written by Carpar Garrett, doorman of the Forty-ninth Street Theatre.

—Hall Johnson, Negro violinist and composer, who played in the famous Miller & Lyles Shuffle Along orchestra, has supplied the music and lyrics, with several additional lyrics by Langston Hughes, whose poem, "Weary Blues," won first prize in a magazine contest last year.

"Goophered" is said to be an attempt to show a truer picture of Negro rural life than has been presented in the colored revues. Negro spirituals, work songs, and dances will have a prominent place in the play.

Bird's Eye View of the Negro Theatre

The theatre is something more than a mere place of entertainment. It is the vehicle of two important arts—drama and acting. It is from this point of view that I shall discuss the Negro theatre. The Negro stage should be a vital force in the spiritual life of the race; it should constantly delight Negro men and women and in its moments of affliction it should exalt them also; and it should crystallize that delight and exaltation in a form worthy of being preserved as a part of our racial contribution to the general culture of mankind. In this article and in others to follow I shall discuss with what measure of success the Negro theatre is performing this function.

Messenger July 1926

The Negro Theatre and Its Public

Although the theatre as an independent institution begins with the actor and is made by him a discussion of the theatre can quite properly begin with the public. The basic aim of the theatre is and always has been to entertain either the whole community or as large a portion of it as possible. Twice in the course of European history it is possible to trace the development of the theatre from its origin to its maturity, and each time it evolved itself out of a crowd and never relinquished its efforts to appeal to the desires and tastes and even the whims of the populace.

Nowhere is the intimate relationship between art and life more clearly expressed than it is by the reciprocity existing between the public and the stage. When the stage gets too far in advance of the public, which it seldom does, it loses contact with all the people but a few fastidious intellectuals who are never numerous or interested enough to give the theatre adequate support. When the stage fails to keep abreast of popular ideas and morality, which is to say when it becomes too unsophisticated and too coarse, as it frequently does, the public will again withdraw its support and perhaps call in the police to remedy matters. But when the stage adjusts itself to the prevailing spiritual requirements of the people, satisfying their soul hunger with appropriate diversion, it receives the full measure of public approval which is always its greatest reward.

The public of the Negro theatre is divided in two groups. One group which supports the theatre with its money, presence and applause, while the other group stays away and favors the theatre with the boon of its criticism. Although it may at first appear inconsistent with the content of the preceding paragraph the second group, perhaps, is quite as influential in making the Negro theatre what it is as the first group. The first group is recruited from the lower levels of the race while the second consists of the educated classes who, because of their higher standard of life, make more exacting demands on the theatre.

The Groundlings Pay the Fiddler

Naturally enough, the people who pay their money to get in the theatre are going to exert a more direct influence on the stage. A theatre financed by the state or a group of powerful patrons can to a limited extent ignore the demands of its immediate audience and address its appeal to what it considers a worthier part of the community, hoping eventually to attract that part of the public to its performances. But a theatre supported by admission fees must be immediately responsive to the wishes of the people in the seats. When the theatre lives on the quarters and half dollars of unlettered and lewd folks, laborers and menials and hoidens and hoodlums and persons who are materially prosperous but spiritually bankrupt, it must present the kind of entertainment its clientele can comprehend and enjoy; which means it must devote itself to exaggerated buffoonery, obscene farce and sex-exciting dancing, supplemented with such curiosities as giants, midgets, acrobats, musical seals and mathematical jackasses.

This does not mean that the audience the Negro theatre at present caters to is vicious. It is merely vulgar. But the influence it exerts on the theatre is vicious. It drives the more sensitive and intelligent actors out of the theatre and discourages those who remain from attempting innovations. Thus we see that a part of the responsibility for the Negro theatre remaining at a standstill fully thirty years can be laid at the door of the public.

It should not be presumed that because the Negro theatre and its active public are low in tone that it is any the less a medium of spiritual expression. No matter how complex or refined a civilization becomes a large proportion, perhaps a majority, of the individuals of which it is composed will always remain primitive intellectually and spiritually. Dean Inge, in Society in Rome under the Caesars, and Brander-Matthews, in The Development of the Drama, describe conditions existing in the Roman theatre under the Empire which all but precisely parallel conditions in the Negro theatre today. This will not surprise us when we reflect that, regardless of time or place, the tastes of primitive men are approximately the same. The spectator in the Roman theatre was in most cases a legal slave or a beggar and like the spectator in the Negro theatre today, who is in most cases an economic slave or a loafer, he wanted to forget his life of drudgery for an hour or so while luxuriating in what he considered were the joys of a sybarite. His theatre adapted itself to his low aspirations just as the Negro theatre has adapted itself to the similar low aspirations of the hall boys and servant girls who fill its auditoriums. The modern Negro audience is worthy of a little more respect, however; for the Roman theatre was supported by the state and wealthy citizens while the Negro audience pays its way with its hard earned money, and insisting that what it pays for be adjusted to suit its taste is an honest and manly attitude.

Indifference of the Better Class

From an esthetic point of view a low spiritual tone is not necessarily an unwholesome one. The important thing is that the spiritual expression of a people should be spontaneous and unaffected. This point is almost always overlooked by the better class Negroes who are dissatisfied with the prevailing condition of the Negro stage. This class with its higher ideals, higher morals and higher aspirations should be the leavening factor in the audience of the Negro theatre, in which case the stage in adjusting itself to the tastes of both the higher and lower elements would reflect the mean of race culture. But by its inconstant attendance the better class deprives the stage of that censorship of the intelligent without the guidance of which the theatre cannot adapt its appeal to the requirements of its entire public.

The indifference of the better class, perhaps, is not its worst fault. The ideal audience goes to the theatre with the simple desire to be entertained with some kind of theatrical exhibition. If it is pleased with the performance it rewards the players with its applause; if its taste or morals or intelligence is offended by the performance it makes its disapproval known by remaining silent or dispersing its interest. The one thing this ideal audience demands is that its desire for pleasure be satisfied in a manner consistent with indigenous ideas of propriety. But when the higher type of Negro goes into the theatre he commonly ignores his own tastes as well as the desires of the lower elements in the audience and demands that the performance be adjusted to a set of standards alien to both. He insists on the Negro theatre copying the suave

manners and conventions of the contemporary white American theatre, unaware that the white stage reflects the racial experience of a people whose cultural background has never resembled ours since the beginning of history. Now and again our stage has attempted to give its better class patrons what they demanded but the result has ever been a vexatious artificiality that quickly alienated even that part of its audience which desired the innovation.

The theatre, facing the hard choice between directing its appeal toward a group with relatively high but artificial standards of taste and a group with low but genuine standards, submits to the dictation of the lower element of its audience because it is willing to pay for what it wants while its better class patrons are dissatisfied even when they get what they demand. This domination of our stage by the dregs of the race, while it is unfortunate in some respects, is at least a healthier state of affairs than the ascendancy of sniffish indifference and affectation would be; for sincerity, however crudely expressed, is at the root of every true art. Besides the financial support of the groundlings does keep some sort of theatre in existence. This assures us of the slow evolution of a theatrical tradition and it keeps a corps of performers in contact with the technique of the playhouse and the atmosphere of the theatre. When dramatists begin to appear they will find a body of actors skilled in at least the rudiments of their art.

Noble Johnson, Sojin In DeMille's "King Of Kings"

Character Actors in "The Thief of Bagdad" to Appear in New Production.

CULVER CITY, Calif., Sept. 23.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau.)—Two princes of the flying carpet in Fairbanks' "A Thief of Bagdad," Noble Johnson and Kamiyama Sojin will again appear together in the new biblical production "King of Kings," now being produced by Cecil DeMille.

Sojin, whose real name is Mita, is a Japanese, famous for his wonderful portrayals of convincing Oriental characters seen in the "Sea Beast," "East of Suez" and other super-productions. In "King of Kings" he is cast as a Persian prince, one of the many admirers of Mary Magdalene.

Johnson will play a double role, one of which will be the driver of the Mary Magadaline chariot drawn by a team of wild, fractious zebras. Five zebras were especially imported for this scene from a circus in the Northwest.

SUNSHINE SAMMIE SIGNS CONTRACT $500.00 PER WEEK

Hollywood Cal. Sept., 22 (PCNB)—Arriving home for a few weeks rest following his latest appearance at the Inter-State Theatre (Orpheum booking) San Antonio Texas, and the Iris Theatre, Houston, Joseph Morrison and his famous son, "Sunshine Sammy" in a personal interview with a Pacific Coast News representative showed a telegram and contract from the E. Z. Keough Agency, Chicago engaging "Sammy" for a 20 week engagement at $500 per week over the Orpheum Circuit to open week of Oct. 11 at the Chicago Orpheum.

Turns Down Movie Contract.

Several movie deals including the one heretofore mentioned with the DeVillard Company were turned down in accepting the Chicago offer. After a few days rest Sammy and his partner Harold Bacquet accompanied by Mr. Morrison, will leave for Chicago.

THE NEGRO A REVELATION TO DAVID BELASCO

A few weeks first hand study of Negro life seems to have been a revelation to David Belasco, New York theatrical producer, according to an article written by him and published in the Liberty Magazine. Mr. Belasco discovered that the error of his former estimate of Negro [illegible] notability to art, loyalty to duty and devotions to ideals was due to lack of mutual, sympathetic, open-minded contact out of which a true unbiased estimate must come.

In making up his cast for Lulu Belle, a new production depicting a cross section of modern life, he thought it advisable to use Negro talent rather than burnt cork and [illegible] so he could study them at first hand and at close range.

He says: "Six months ago I thought of the Negro as one not too well equipped for his fight for recognition. Today, amazed by understanding that has come to me, I see him on the threshold of a New Achievement."

This revelation will come to any intelligent, open minded white man who unlearns what long distance prejudicial contact has taught him by using a little time for the sympathetic investigation of the truth about Negro possibilities and actualities.

Most white people have a prepossessing conceit about their knowledge of Negroes! They make their estimate on the basis of the one or two Negroes thy know best and regard any variation from their estimate as exceptions to the rule.

This accounts for their honest assumption that the difference between an educated white and an educated Negro is the mere difference between sterling and tinsel with the durability of the sterling and the glitter of the tinsel compared for their intrinsic qualities.

It is also true that the servant is mostly the only Negro that the white man gets a continuous close-up focus on and that, in this case, the conduct and the expressed sentiment and too often the made-for-the-occasion aspects of the Negro's outside and the depths are impenetrable because of the peculiar adjustment made necessary by the social difference and the consequent uncertainties which he feels to protect himself. Evidently, the only means of knowing the psychology, the actual heart beat of the Negro is to take a back ground of 50 years experience in the world of things into the very midst of his life as did Mr. Belasco and interpret on that background what he sees and feels.

He or any other white man of his type and equipment would meet the same sort of convincing experience through the same sort of contact with the Negro's [illegible] ves:

"Quic[illegible] through all of the life [illegible] neither parrot-like nor, as [illegible] poseurs."

Contrary to [illegible] majo[illegible]ion of those who think that the Negro's life is dominated by the inf[illegible]ity complex and that he keeps up a conscious posing for the effect of a bold frontage, there is the most natural sequence of reactions and life-emotions affected by the events of his contact, which enrich his life and store it with the great fund of humor that affords a safety escape for the possible bitterness engendered by the taunts and insults that might either develop a destructive inferiority complex or accumulate an equally as destructive supply of poisoned spleen.

Perhaps, more than the "sorrow-swept Jew" the Negro's sense of humo has been a protection. It has got him tolerance where it might have bee otherwise impossible. It has got him audience where he could not have bee heard. It has protected his heart from the loss of blood by piercing insult It has been the precursor of profitable appeal for sympathy and philanthropy and a strong argument against the insinuative incriminations of hereditar beastiality of character.

Mr. Belasco tells of his explorations and his consequent change an findings in this very frank manner:

"Night after night, I went to the cabarets, until my entire attitu toward the Negroes had undergone a change. When word went throu

Harlem that I wanted more than 100 types for my new play, it seemed th the entire population moved on me. . . . We chose several hundred te atively. It was this personal contact that sold me finally to the Negr suddenly there came to me the realization that success lay in winning the loyalty and in binding them to me with such ties of affection that they cou be depended on to respond to my slightest direction. I assured them tha there would be no caricaturing of the race, no atrocious comedy, etc."

This remarkably frank procedure demonstrates one thing beyond doub that the attitude of those seeking information about the Negro must be pu posefu[illegible] and sympathetic, the contact must be first hand and the power interpretation strong to gain anything more than a superficial knowledge his ability and character.

David Belasco's experience also demonstrates that loyalty, affection a devotion are the natural fruits that come as the result of any sincere effo at helping or cooperating on any plan where the Negro's interests are involved. The tendency to advertise the grotesque, the repulsive, the comic, the undesirable features only in the Negro life by white people has made him sensitively doubtful about the sincerity of any effort at a fair appr of his character, and his reaction to any effort that is not convincingly sympathetic and sincerely purposeful is restrained.

Thus, th[illegible] of contact a[illegible]

The wh[illegible] to him; the valuable to knowledge [illegible] they assum[illegible] feelings. B[illegible] of this expe[illegible] and the po[illegible] Negro by th[illegible] man's nose [illegible] the Negro is[illegible] same type [illegible] degree.

It mean[illegible] cosmopolitan[illegible] applies as w[illegible] combined to

Theatrical—1926

Individual Troupes et

Florence Mills' Parisian Success Creates Protes

PARIS, July 19.—The big hit b Black Americans now playing in th various theaters and cabarets i France is creating quite a stir in thi country. Defenders have bee voiced again the entrance of thes successful American entertainers. Th managers are not much perturbed, be cause the box-office receipts have bee increased to a marked degree sinc these p[illegible]d, bu many critics are using their pens t stir up prejudice against these per formers of colo[illegible] that it i not to the interest of their own Black citizenry, whom they believe fully ca pable of taking their place on the stage, and adding that all of the mon ey being paid to these performers from America should go to fill the pockets of Frenchmen.

Florence Mills in her Blackbird review is playing to standing room only, and the little American singer and dancer has captured Paris.

CLEVELAND O. NEWS
MAY 26, 1925

Gilpin Players Win Delegates' Applause

Before 500 delegates to the annual convention here of the National Conference of Social Workers, the Gilpin Players, local colored amateur theatrical group, Tuesday night presented their latest production, "The No Count Boy." The play, staged in the art museum, was loudly applauded. The group, sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. R. W. Jelliffe, is directed by Mrs. Martin Heydemann.

BENEFIT SHOW AT ALHAMBRA THEATRE A SUCCESS

Mrs. Alice Meyers, George Walker's Mother Sent Back to Her Home in Kansas With Fund of $2,000.

By Romeo L. Dougherty

While many benefits have been staged for various people in the theatrical world during the past few years, few can surpass that staged for Mrs. Alice Meyers, mother of the late George Walker, at the Alhambra Theatre on Tuesday midnight of June 22.

The turnout of talent to take part in the affair was one of the greatest tributes that could be paid to the memory of the late "Bon Bon Buddy," and, topping the climax of everything "touchin' on an appertainin' to," as the late Bill Devery would say, was the wonderful manner in which the general public responded to the invitation to sit in and enjoy a night of rare entertainment.

The late George Walker long before he died had earned a niche in the theatrical Hall of Fame not only for his great work before the footlights but for the untiring effort he had put forth in trying to better the condition of the colored performer.

Until the coming of Walker both colored and white America had almost accepted the idea of associating the colored artist with a buffoonery from which nothing could divorce him, but Walker surrounded himself with an array of brilliant colored writers and producers when opportunity beckoned and proved to America that Negroes, when given the chance, could produce something which could appeal not only to America but to Europe as well.

When Williams and Walker made their memorable invasion of London at the head of their company they were commanded to appear at Buckingham Palace, an honor which, up to that time, had never been conferred upon a musical comedy show, white or colored. Finding Williams, Walker, Rogers, Shipp and the majority of the others in the company to be above the average in intelligence, the late King Edward hobnobbed with the colored Americans to such an extent New York society "fell over itself" in trying to follow in the footsteps of a king, before whom many among the elite would have given a hand to be "commanded."

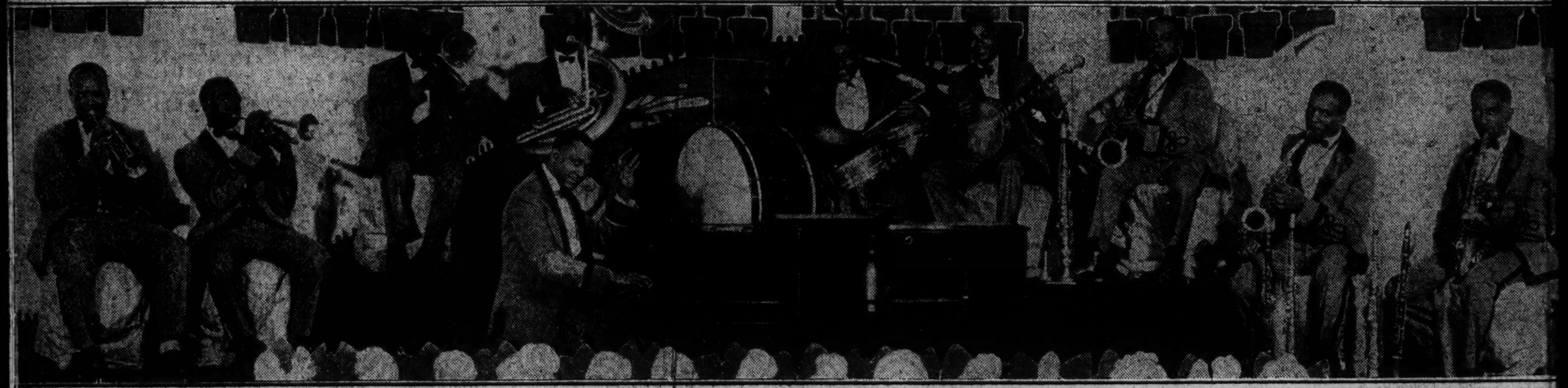
The return of Williams and Walker to America was more of a triumphal entry than the mere coming of a colored show to Broadway. The King of England and his queen had "set the fashion" and all roads led to those theatres where the best shows ever written by colored men were being shown. And it was at this time that Walker made his greatest stand for the recognition of his brothers in the game. His wife, Aida Overton Walker, had led the cotillion with one of America's bluebloods, and while they were being made much of Walker was driving home to white producers those demands which eventually made it possible for other shows to get a fair break.

It was for these things that hundreds journeyed to the Alhambra Theatre last Tuesday night and contributed almost two thousand dollars toward a fund to keep his mother from want during the remainder of her life. Bill Robinson, William H. Davis, Flournoy Miller, Mrs. Edward Warren and a few others contributed their share in helping to make the affair the success it turned out to be. The glory of planting the seed that bore fruit goes to Messrs. Sissle and Blake, in whose names the thought was conceived of giving a benefit for Mrs. Meyers, and right here in the office of the Amsterdam News the first move was made to carry out the desires of Eubie and Noble.

We do not believe that any of these people are craving any unusual amount of glory for the things they have done. What has been accomplished will speak louder than words, and the satisfaction of having contributed their share towards making a worthy old soul happy, perhaps for the balance of her life, is reward enough. Through the efforts of Bill Robinson, a splendid bill was arranged and numbered some of the most prominent performers on and off Broadway.

Among those taking part in the benefit at the Alhambra were Benny Roberts and his Palace Theatre Orchestra, Sol Levine, Four Chocolate Dandies, Duckett and Love, Jack Denton, Miss Helen Morgan, Joe Santley, Bill Robinson, Benny Leonard, Jack Osterman, Jack Donohue, J. C. Flippen, Tom Patricola, Patti Moore and Company, Frank Fay, Perry and Cowan, Senator Murphy, Nitzi Vernelle, Boyd Senter, Miss Linda, Miller and Lyles, Seymour, Jeanette and Jazz Band, the Dixie Four, Lucky Sambo Stars.

A Snappy Chorus and a Mighty Good Jazz Band



Shake, Rattle and Roll," From Which the Above Scenes Are Reproduced This Week, With Joe Jordon's Splendid Array of Musicians, Opened at the Lafayette Theatre on Monday and Gives Promise of Hanging Up a Record at the Local House by the End of the Week.

Theatrical – 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.,

"Beyond Evil," New Play at the Cort Theatre, Pains and Thrills

By David Thorne, presented by the author. Staged by Edward Massey. Settings by Cleon Throckmorton.

THE CAST.

Kitty Robinson..Betty Sargent
Ellen Robinson..Hlen Beresford
Gustave Berg..Robert Horwood
Peter Chickov...Nat S. Jerome
Madeline Robinson..Mary Blair
Dairy Murray.....Bee Morosco
John Robinson...Louis Ancker
Richard Osborn..Edward Reese
Tom Walker.Edouardo Sanchez

By J. A. ROGERS

To the four sex plays now awaiting action by the play jury of this city there will undoubtedly be added a fifth—"Beyond Evil"—which made its first appearance at the Cort Theatre, 48th street near Broadway, Monday night.

The reception was to say the least riotous! Laughter, rocking laughter, hisses and boos. The audience howled now for joy, now for disgust. As I write this an hour later I don't know how to size up "Beyond Evil," but one thing I do know, I wouldn't have missed it for anything.

"Beyond Evil" has touches of realism which are as daring as one can imagine in this daring age.

Briefly, the plot is this: Madeline Robinson, a nerve-strung, jazz-struck, romantic girl living in a small New Jersey town with a plodding husband old enough for her father, loves Richard Osborn, a young man of her own age, who returns her love. Certain that she is his body and soul, she mortgages her husband's business for $4,000 and prepares to flee to New York with him. At the crucial moment, however, she discovers that Osborn's attraction is purely a physical one and that he isn't willing to fly with her, and marry her, after a divorce.

At this juncture enters a Negro, Tom Walker, who went to school with Mrs. Robinson, and for whom in the presence of her husband and mother-in-law she expresses admiration to their disapproval and disguest. This happens just prior to Osborn's refusal. She now takes to Walker, who lives in Harlem—Walker is a lawyer just beginning practise—and says he must be sure to send her his address.

The next scene opens in Walker's room in Harlem, which she visits under the pretense of looking for someone else. This winds up in a sex [illegible], well, if there was such an explosion over "All God's Chillun," one wonders just what is going to happen over "Beyond Evil"—perhaps nothing less than an earthquake. It would last south of the Mason-Dixon line about as long as a snowdrop in sheol. There is a misunderstanding and she and Walker part. She now returns to her husband. There is a scene between herself, her husband and her mother-in-law, during which she threatens suicide. Previously she had scorned the love of the aged money lender who is willing to forego the mortgage for her favors. Her husband still loves her, and is willing to take her back, but she simply finds it impossible to return his affections, and finally drinks poison.

Miss Blair, who also played next to Paul Robeson in "All God's Chillun," has a very difficult part. Her acting at times lacked sincerity, but was on the whole creditable, and certainly courageous. The interpretation of Edouardo Sanchez, who played the part of Tom Walker excellent at times, left something to be desired. Sanchez is a Cuban, the son of Bernabe Sanchez of Havana, owner of a large ranch. He is 22 years old and a graduate of Harvard University. In his part were some fine lines about the problems of the near-white. Nat S. Jerome, as Peter Chichov, the money leander; Louis Ancker, as the husband; Helen Beresford as the mother-in-law, and Betty Sargent as the little daughter, were more natural in their parts, which are much easier. Miss Blair's part is, as I said, a very difficult one, and will no doubt assume more reality if the play lasts.

Again, I do not know whether to praise or condemn "Beyond Evil." How did it get that name? The play is a piece of drab realism, lacking the usual inspirational bunk and plot. But I went to the theatre looking for excitement and something to talk about and I found it. vea bo!

N.Y. WORLD
MAY 19, 1926

THE PUZZLING "EMPEROR JONES"

According to a despatch, when the Emperor Jones made his bow in Vienna he received an uncommonly cool reception. Despite an excellent production by Max Reinhardt the audience was puzzled, and the critics even went so far as to condemn the play as melodramatic rot. All of which will be strange news here. For if there was one play which seemed so simple that a child could understand it, it was the "Emperor Jones." At no point does the fable involve any but the most elementary plot; at no point does the protagonist feel any but the most elementary emotions. Why, then, does it puzzle Vienna?

Probably because Vienna is unable to supply that familiarity with the Negro's history, so universal with us, which is necessary to make the play plausible. From beginning to end there is no episode which is without its significance to us: when we see Jones moaning in the slave-ship or bowing before the witch-doctor we realize that if he did not see these things literally, at least he saw something dreadful; and thus his disintegration in the dark forest, far from seeming like melodrama, takes on for us the quality of inevitability. But to an audience that never heard of a slave-ship or a witch-doctor it may all seem like fantasy out of the playwright's imagination, strained, unreal and incredible. An audience, after all, is as much a part of the play as the actors. An audience which had never heard of Yom Kippur would never laugh at "Abie's Irish Rose."

CAROLYN SNOWDEN GETS UNIVERSAL CONTRACT

Colored Cabaret Star Signs For Second Jewel Production.

(Pacific Coast News Bureau)

Universal City, Calif., Aug. 11—Carolyn Snowden, popular colored cabaret star of the Hollywood night life group, has been signed by Universal to appear in her second Jewel Production, "The Salt Seekers," a Louis Weber production from the story "Egypt" by Ernest Pascal, on which work will start next week.

In "Marriage Clause"

Miss Snowden has just completed her part as maid in "The Marriage Clause," the first of the Jewel productions to be made by Louis Weber under her new contract with Universal. Francis X. Bushman and Billy Dove are the featured players, supported by a cast which includes Oland Harri, Andre Cheron, Carolyn Snowden and Oscar Smith a colored actor who started in pictures at the Lasky studios as Wallie Ried's valet.

May Play "Topsy"

As the "Topsy" part in "Uncle Tom's Cabin" still remains unfilled, there is a strong possibility that Miss Snowden wll be chosen for the coveted poition. At least the consensus of opinion is that the "Topsy" characterization should be a natural protrayal rather than a black face substitution.

Started In San Francisco

Carolyn Snowden received her first stage experience in San Francisco in 1923 in Sam Harris' musical comedy "Struttin Along." Coming to Los Angeles she became quite popular in the Night Clubs and Cafes heading several reviews by Franchon &Marco. Before entering pictures she was the fatured drawing card at the Club Albabam and more recently the Nightengale Cafe.

PAUL ROBESON and "Black Boy" have been making ready in various Connecticut spots. This, it will be recalled, is Herbert Liveright's production of a play about a negro prizefighter, written by [illegible] and Frank Dazey. Said The Stamford Advocate:

"'Black Boy' is the story of a colored prizefighter who encounters many vicissitudes, chiefly of a harmful nature, through the workings of a child-like mind, which are influenced by the hoard of fickle parasites that are always evident in the wake of the great. Black Boy's talent for leather pushing is first displayed to the fistic world in the training camp of one Mauler, with whom he agrees to exchange swats for a consideration of $10 from Mauler's manager, 'Square Deal.' Hitherto the mountainous negro has had pugilistic experience solely in wharf battles on the Mississippi, but after his encounter with Mauler he girds himself with the world championship belt during a single intermission, and is surrounded with the general conception of a negro's idea of splendor in a Harlem apartment—a la Lulu Belle. He is brought back to reality from his worldly dream of paradise by two kayos—one professional and the other domestic disillusionment, such as must have been experienced by Timon.

"'Black Boy' and 'What Price Glory' have much in common. Both have truth—rather bitter truth—for a foundation. They are both intensely virile. They both look life squarely in the face and answer the problems to which they give rise in a fashion pleasing to an editor of Godey's Ladies' Book—and that is a combination quite ideal in this sham of the restoration drama that we meet in annals of the Players' Club Bulletin and Zit's. The Tully-Dazey play is not designed for Blue Law Puritans, but it is a study for the Puritan who knows the world and can see virtue in his theatrical fare, even when its dress and idiom are not lily-white."

BELASCO SAYS NEGRO ACTOR IS NEW FORCE IN THEATRICAL WORLD

David Belasco, the producer of the sensational "Lulu Belle", has made a discovery and a prophecy. In an article appearing in the August 7 issue of Liberty, entitled "Tomorrow's Stage and the Negro", he frankly discusses the future of the Negro and the stage. He says in part:

Fate has decreed that I should know the Negro of our modern days; that I should know him and his psychology intimately. And the contact has brought me to this finding:

The theater of tomorrow must reckon with a new force—the race of Ham!

I say this in all sincerity, out of my 50 years of labor for the American stage: "The Negro, from today onward, will compel recognition through the sheer power of his instinctive mime talent!"

I will go further and declare that no race, even the sorrow-swept Jew, can surpass the Negro for instinctive stage ability. The same receptivity that drove their African ancestors to battle frenzy at the sound of drums, has been translated by generations of contact with civilization into terms of emotion-expression, delicate and sensitive in the extreme.

And as a climax to my prediction, I believe that another decade will see a Negro theater in which we of the Caucasian race will witness a surprising development of this hitherto dormant nature gift. The Negro, with his submerged, instinctive voice, is a natural actor. He has a sufficient background of tragedy to make him fertile ground in which to implant the seeds of splendid acting.

Six months ago I thought of the Negro as one not to well equipped for his fight for recognition. Today, amazed by understanding that has come to me, I see him on the threshold of a new achievement. So eager is he to express that urge from within that it amounts to instinctive talent.

These discoveries come to me with the production of a new play—Lulu Belle—with a cast of 117 Negroes and 13 white players.

Of this colored group only 11 had any previous stage experience. Every member of the company was of a type truly representative of the 200,000 blacks congregated in the Harlem section of New York City. At first I was minded to do the play with white actors in burnt-cork make-up, but I sensed the unreality of such a proceeding and turned to a study of the Negro race at first hand. Success of the play depended on whether the Negro would display a talent sufficient to fit my needs.

Here was my requirement: Lulu Belle is a symphonic cross-section of modern conditions. There are the major and minor motifs of the high-brown cabaret dancer's life—all in the center of the stage. Back of it, surrounding it, and mingling with it, are the colorful overtones of Negro community life.

One does not invest thousands of dollars in a mere hunch. So, with Miss Ulric, my star, and members of my production staff, I made journey after journey into the night life of the Harlem Negro section to watch the black folk in their hours of play.

It was a revelation to me—no less. Quickly I came to sense the strong dramatic urge that runs through all of the life of these apparently carefree people.

I found them neither parrot-like nor, as I had thought, conscious poseurs. Instead, I realized that they have the faculty of reacting emotionally to their surroundings, each individual falling naturally into the role his own station in life would indicate under the new circumstances. Actually, they are emotion chameleons.

I found that a jazzy, lively bit of music brought flashing smiles, shouts of mirth, and foot-pattings. A sentimental song caused an instant hush and an attitude of reverence. A waltz tune followed. Before the third bar had been played, every form in the room was swaying rhythmically in time to the music.

Night after night we went to the cabarets, until my entire mental attitude toward the Negroes had undergone change. In them I found that ingenuous, willing something that producers demand of players cast for character roles.

"I am amazed," I told Miss Ulric. "These people are natural actors. And, best of all, I know they will act without realizing they are in character."

"But will an audience frighten them into stiffness? Will they forget their roles?" she asked.

"Are they less natural because we are here?" I retored. "What we must do is to make each one so visualize and actually live his part that distractions will be impossible."

When the word went through Harlem that I wanted more than 100 types for my new play, it seemed that the entire population moved on me at my studio. Of the flood we chose several hundred tentatively, and for the next few days I spent my waking hours interviewing them.

It was this personal contact that sold me finally, on the modern Negro. Suddenly there came to me the realization that success lay in winning their loyalty and in binding them to me with such ties of affection that they could be depended on to respond eagerly to my slightest direction.

As we talked I watched each face. I found them good listeners—a quality requisite in any actor; and I found them, further, remarkably quick to grasp instruction. I assured them there would be no caricaturing of the race, no atrocious comedy make-up, and no exaggerated dialect. Further, I assured them there would be no high-hatting by whites about the theater, and ended by giving them the big rehearsal room under the stage for their club room during the engagement.

In my company there are representatives of all walks of Negro life. One, Madame De Knight, is a well-known colored educator and a leader of women's activities. Another, Miss Evelyn Preer, will, I believe, make her mark as an emotional actress one of these days. Already she is a splendid reader, gifted with a delicacy of diction and an understanding few achieve. Edna Thomas, likewise, displays fire, imagery and talent.

Then we have a young dentist, working for funds with which to complete his course; a man studying for the ministry; several who are taking correspondence courses, and others who have been graduated from institutions of learning. One is a Columbia man, several are from Fisk University, and there are accountants and men skilled in the trades.

But all, from the street gamin to the educated, well poised Columbia graduate, gave me ample proof of a wondrous sympathy. Their every glance displayed a keen understanding of my great crisis; so much so, in fact, that I was compelled to stimulate a light-heartedness I did not feel—else they too would have been plunged into my mental doldrums.

I marvel continually over their delicate sensibility to external influence. Actually I have found it necessary to neutralize, rather than speed up, their emotional expression, so finely are they attuned to life's harmonies—and disharmonies.

Also I find the Negro, particularly the one with educational advantages, thinking very sanely along racial lines. Alexander Rogers, Bert Williams' song writer and associate for years, had this to say recently of his race and its future:

"We have our radicals; what people has not? But we of the conservative type realize that we must demonstrate out fitness for the better things before we demand them. It is a place we must achieve from within outselves by developing meritorious qualities, not by seeking pity or posing as buffoons. Some clowns have achieved riches—but none in the Hall of Fame.

"The Negro has changed in his attitude toward himself. He has become ambitious, and he is demanding that his children fit themselves for the place he is trying to make for them. Our poets, musicians, playwrights and authors are struggling for recognition—but they are not faltering.

"But the Negro no longer looks to the Omnipotent for a miracle. He realizes that what he achieves must be from within, and he is striving, striving as never before."

I am convinced that Alexander Rogers speaks truth. Ambition is a Negro characteristic today. And I hope soon to read a play this gifted man has written about the race—from the inside.

Today the Negro is just as susceptible to emotional reaction as were his ancestors when the drum beats throbbed on the night air of Africa. This I believe accounts for his splendid dramatic talent. Certainly it is something I would not take from his spiritual equipment, for from it will come his stage successes.

Just recently I said to Miss Ulric: "Well, Miss Doubter, what about the colored folks now? Have they failed you?"

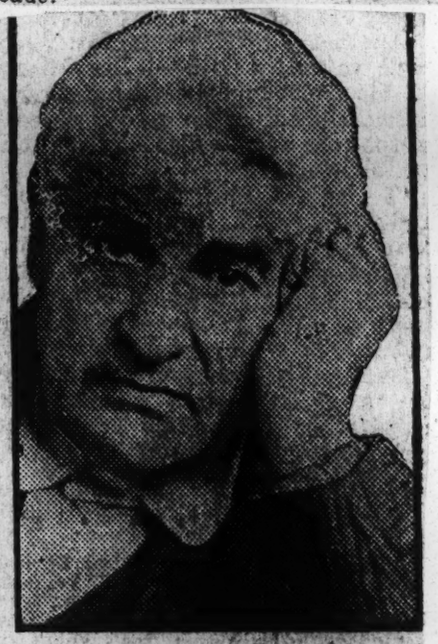
"Never!" she responded emphatically. "Instead, they have helped. They give me something indefinable out of their enthusiasm and their devotion to us all—a something which makes my work truly easy. Such loyalty and devotion as they lavish on you! I respect them greatly—and I always will."

I am glad to be the first producer to show the Negro, not in caricature, but as he really is.

It is a far cry from native kraal to cosmopolian stage—but—

The Negro has made the journey.

Watch him during the next decade!



DAVID BELASCO

PARAMOUNT-LASKY USE 750 ACTORS

(By GEO. PERRY.)

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Aug. 19.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau.)—Frank Lloyd, who gave the world one of the biggest sea dramas ever filmed in "The Sea Hawk" has started production of another epic sea picture, "The Eagle of the Sea," his first under the Paramount-Lasky banner, featuring Ricardo Cortez and Florence Vidor.

Theatrical - 1926

Individual Troupes, etc.

David Belasco, Eminent Artist and Showman, Says Theatre of Future Must Reckon With A 'New Force'

Discussing "Lulu Belle," His Current Success, In Liberty Magazine, Famed Producer Predicts That The Negro Will Compel Recognition Through Power of His "Instinctive Mime Ability."

Will the Negro in art usher in a renaissance in racial life and relationship with a greater potency than has attended the influence of sociology, philanthropy and religion?

Must the race ultimately rely upon art as the one positive medium of bringing about its greater enhancement in the eyes of mankind?

Norfolk Journal and Pilot

Kelly Miller's View

In his first release for the new year to the group of newspapers to which he regularly contributes Dr. Kelly Miller wrote:

9-7-26

"The nature and circumstances of the Negro race contain a wealth of cultural material which has scarcely been touched. The pathos, the tragedy, the joy, the sorrow which gather around this people, when properly portrayed and adequately presented according to the canons of art and style will make a powerful appeal to the imagination of mankind.

"After all is said and done, art represents the highest values of life. The producers of art hold the first place in esteem and appreciation of their fellowmen and the race that produces artists along the various lines of culture will be enhanced in the eyes of mankind."

Dr. Miller was writing under the head, "The New Negro," an article suggested by Dr. Alaine Leroy Locke's book of the same title then just published, in review of which the former commented:

"Dr. Locke looks to the portrayal of the Negro soul in artistic form as indicative of a renaissance in racial life and relationship. He boldly discounts the methods of sociology, philanthropy and religion for the more subtle and potent influence of art."

David Belasco's Prediction

David Belasco, pre-eminent artist and showman, a producer of renown, discussing the cast of his 'Lulu Belle,' his current success, in the August 7 issue of Liberty Magazine, under the caption "The Negro and the Stage." predicts that "The Negro from today onward, will compel recognition thru the sheer power of his instinctive mime ability." In the discussion of this production, Mr. Belasco adds a significant morsel to the views of Dr. Kelly Miller and Dr. Locke in the Negro in Art.

Mr. Belasco, with confident assurance, declares in part: "Fate has decreed that I should know the Negro of our modern days; that I should know him and his psychology intimately. And the contact has brought me to this finding:

The theater of tomorrow must reckon with a new force—the race of Ham.

"I say this in all sincerity, out of my fifty years of labor for the American stage: 'The Negro from today onward, will compel recognition through the sheer power of his instinctive mime talent.'"

"I will go further and declare that no race, even the sorrowing Jew, can surpass the Negro for instinctive stage ability. The same receptivity that drove their African ancestors to battle frenzy at the sound of war drums has been translated by generations in contact with civilization into terms of emotional expression, delicate and sensitive in the extreme.

Negro Theatre

"And as a climax to my prediction, I believe that another decade will see a Negro theatre in which we of the Caucasian race will witness a surprising development of this hitherto dormant nature gift. The Negro, with his submerged, instinctive voice, is a natural actor. He has a sufficient background of tragedy to make him fertile ground in which to implant the seeds of splendid acting.

"Six months ago I thought of the Negro as one not too well equipped for his right for recognition. Today, amazed by understanding that has come to me, I see him on the threshold of a new achievement. So eager is he to express that urge from within that it amounts to instinctive talent.

"These discoveries came to me with the production of a new play —Lulu Belle—with a cast of 117 Negroes and thirteen white players.

Of this colored group only eleven had any previous stage experience. Every member of the company was a type truly representative of the 200,000 blacks congregated in the Harlem section of New York City. At first I was minded to do the play with white actors in burnt-cork make-up but I sensed the unreality of such a proceeding and turned to a study of the Negro race at first hand. Success of the play depended on whether the Negro would display a talent sufficient to fit my needs.

The Play, Lulu Belle

"Here was my requirement: Lulu Belle is a symphonic cross-section of modern conditions. There are the major and minor motifs on the high-brown cabaret dancer's life—all in the center of the stage. Back of it, surrounding it, and mingling with it, are the colorful overtones of Negro community life.

"One does not invest thousands of dollars in a mere hunch. So, with Miss Ulric, my star, and members of my production staff, I made journey after journey into the night life of Harlem Negro section to watch the black roll in their hours of play.

"It was a revelation to me—no less. Quickly I came to sense the strong dramatic urge that runs through all the life of these apparently carefree people.

"I found them neither parrot-like nor, as I had thought, conscious poseurs. Instead, I realized that they have the faculty of reacting emotionally to their surroundings, each individual falling naturally into the role his own station in life would indicate under the new circumstances. Actually, they are emotion chameleons."

Describes Harlem Night Life

Here Mr. Belasco gives an intimate penetrating description of Harlem's cabaret night life. "Night after night," he continues, "we went to the cabarets, until my entire mental attitude toward Negroes had undergone a change. In them I found that ingenuous, willing something that producers demand of players cast for character roles."

"'I am amazed,'" I told Miss Ulric. "'These people are natural actors. And best of all, I know they will act without realizing they are in a character.'"

Speaking of his five weeks' experience in rehearsal with the 117 Negroes of his company, chosen from the various Harlem types, Mr. Belasco says:

"They never failed me in loyalty, interest, ambition to achieve, or in their almost childish devotion. There were no defections, no failures. When the play opened in Philadelphia, it was with the original cast. Ordinarily in a company of that size there would have been ten or a dozen changes.

"'This condition I credit entirely to that dominating loyalty, added to the innate dramatic talent that unquestionably is a part of their soul equipment. Often I wonder if Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe had not sensed more than a bit of this when she wrote Uncle Tom's Cabin. Certainly she recognized something in the Negro deeper than merely the reflexes of an alien human chattel. . . . I marvel continually over their delicate sensibility to external influence. Actually I have found it necessary to neutralize, rather than speed up their emotional expression, so finely are they attuned to life's harmonies—and disharmonies.

"Also I found the Negro, particularly the one with educational advantages, thinking very sanely along racial lines. . . . . I am glad to be the first producer to show the Negro, not in caricature, but as he really is.

"It is a far cry from natie kraal to cosmopolitan stage—but—

"The Negro has made the journey.

"Watch him during the next decade!"

David Belasco, after fifty years experience with the American stage, sees new vistas opened to the Negro race through the dramatic art. The thought is entrancing. Dr. Kelly Miller and Dr. Alaine Locke have made the prophecy in advance, but for the white world, Mr. Belasco has made the discovery.

Nearly half of the taxes of Honolulu now go to public school expenses.

A Japanese company in Mexico recently cleared $200,000 on a few carloads of ore taken from silver pockets.

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THE SPOTLIGHT BY WALTER WHITE

THE NEGRO ARTIST COMES INTO HIS OWN

The rising tide of Negro art and artists seems not yet to know abatement. More, the enthusiasm for the Negro's gifts seem to be spreading all over the country instead of being localized in Manhattan Island. There has been no visible diminution in the audiences which Roland Hayes commands whenever a concert of his is announced, while music critics in Chicago recently burst into ecstatic praise over the initial appearance there of Paul Robeson and Lawrence Brown. The music critic of the Chicago Herald-Examiner was even moved to declare that Robeson's voice is "one of the most beautiful in the world." J. Rosamond Johnson and Taylor Gordon have sung with great success in and near New York at public and private recitals, while Julius Bledsoe has recently returned from a tour of the South, in one city, New Orleans, singing to the first mixed audience a Negro singer has ever faced in that place.

In the offing are other singers and productions. Of the latter the nearest to completion, apparently, is the jazz opera for which the music is being done by Otto Harling of Chicago, who achieved a sensational success there recently when his "The Eve of St. Agnes" was presented. The story is being written by Lawrence Stallings, author of the play, "What Price Glory" and of the moving picture, "The Big Parade." Arthur Hopkins will produce the piece next fall and is spending, so the report goes, upwards of $150,000 in staging it. The other prospective score is that on which George Gershwin is working, a jazz opera, which Otto Kahn has offered to finance. Gershwin is now in Europe and probably working on his opera.

* * * * * *

The same activity is affecting the stage. To my own knowledge there are six or seven plays of various degrees of excellence awaiting the success of Belasco's "Lulu Belle." I have sought several times to purchase tickets to this highly successful show, but with no success, inasmuch as the earliest seats available, outside of the booths of the ticket speculators, are two and three weeks ahead. Oceans of ink have flowed in discussion of this play. Whether it is good or bad, one thing is certain—it will demonstrate still further, along with O'Neill's "All God's Chillun," that white and colored people can appear on a stage together without the heavens falling.

* * * * * *

A few nights ago I heard a very well-known actress, in fact, she is generally regarded as being the greatest of the younger generation of stars, say that she had bought with her own money a play of a colored girl who "passes" and this play she is going to produce herself. She is white and the author of the play is white. Jim Tully, also white, author of "Tramping on Life," has done a play based on the life of a well-known prize-fighter, which is soon to be produced and rumor has it that Paul Robeson is to play the lead. And these are only two of the number of plays of Negro life done by writers of sufficient experience and reputation to warrant the guess that they will be produced.

* * * * * *

The same flood of energy and inspiration is attacking the field of novel writing. Three or four prominent white novelists have either finished or are at work upon novels of Negro life. The Viking Press is soon to publish a new book of spirituals and a book of work songs and blues. W. C. Handy's book of blues, illustrated by Miguel Covarrubias, the brilliant Mexican caricaturist, will be on the stands within a few weeks. A. and C. Boni will publish it. Howard Odum and Guy Johnson of the University of North Carolina, have almost completed their "Workaday Songs of the Southern Negro" and the same press will publish this month N. M. Puckett's "Folk Beliefs of Southern Negroes."

* * * * * *

All this random cataloguing is more or less inspired by the above and other bits of information which are heard daily. The New Republic gave slightly more than four pages in its issue of March 3rd to an appreciation of Paul Robeson by Elizabeth Shipley Sergeant, while the "New Yorker," journal of the sophisticate, the same week lists Roland Hayes as one of the topnotchers as a box office attraction among present-day concert artists, placing him in the class with John McCormack and Feodor Chaliapin.

* * * * * *

The tragedy of all this phenomenal activity, if it can be termed a tragedy, rests in the fact that while all of this is from the stuff of Negro life, so few Negroes are reaping the benefit from it. It is true we have Hayes and Robeson and Cullen and Hughes, but white writers and composers are swooping down upon the fertile artistic field of Negro life and taking the cream. Not that in any way is censure of them even implied by these words—instead Gershwin and Carl Van Vechten and Covarrubias and O'Neill are helping tremendously to show America how silly it has been in not giving recognition sooner to the Negro as an artist. My quarrel instead is with Negroes who are walking daily over veritable gold mines of material—and ignoring it. There are scores, hundreds, thousands of short stories and novels begging to be brought into being and few colored writers seem to see what is so close at hand. It is true that writing or singing or painting or any other field of the arts requires infinite patience. It is true that the road to recognition is hard and stony and full of pitfalls. It is true that the monetary rewards are often meagre when compared with what one can earn in a profession or business. But it is equally true that when one has done the hard work and feels the pride of accomplishment and recognition, nothing on earth can compensate one so well as the doing of an artistic thing, done artistically.

* * * * * *

Splendid work is being done through the prize contests conducted each year by the Crisis and Opportunity. Albert and Charles Boni, the publishers, have offered a prize of a thousand dollars for the best novel of Negro life written by a Negro, to which sum will be added the usual royalties.

* * * * * *

These incentives added to the urge to create which properly drives the natural artist on, coupled with the consciousness that his race need not be a barrier to recognition, may bring forth within the next few years welcome additions to the present valiant band of Negro artists.

* * * * * *

"The New Negro" (A. & C. Boni) therefore is not only a picture of accomplishment—in the years to come we are going to see, I feel certain, that that excellent book only served as a compass to unknown, fertile lands. More and more the Negro artist will see the soundness of Tolstoi's observation: "Art is not a pleasure, a solace, or an amusement; art is a great matter. Art is an organ of life, transmitting man's reasonable perception into feeling." He will be willing to serve his long apprenticeship and learn to content himself only with the very best work of which he is capable.

* * * * * *

And therein may lie the approach of greatest value to the thing we call the race problem. A man may be impervious to argument however sound, to statistics however imposing. But I canont imagine a sane man listening to a Hayes or a Robeson singing, or reading the verse of a Cullen or a Hughes, or seeing a Gilpin or a Robeson acting and then mouthily contending that a race which produced such artists is inferior. We need artisans and laborers and doctors and bankers, of course. But the artists are the ones who will point the way out of the wilderness, just as the makers of song and of verse have shown the way to other races and nations.

* * * * * *

But more Negroes must paint, write, sculpt, and sing. And those who do must be encouraged by those who have no talents in these fields. A man's best interpreter is not always himself, but it is reasonably certain that the genius of a race, if it has any, can be expressed only by members of that race.

(From a Late Edition of Yesterday's Times.)

'KONGO' AN EFFECTIVE DRAMA OF VENGEANCE

Walter Huston a Graphic Figure in De Vonde and Gordon's Play of Black-and-White School.

KONGO, a play in three acts, by Chester De Vonde and Kilbourn Gordon. Settings by Yellenti; staged by the authors; produced by Kilbourn Gordon. At the Biltmore Theatre.

Whippy........................Harry McNaughton
Lil Mim........................Betty Bruce Henry
Kirk........................Desmond Gallagher
Flint........................Walter Huston
Zoombie........................Mario Majeroni
Native........................Herbert Ellis
Fuzzy........................Clarence Redd
Kingsland........................Richard Stevenson
Mrs. Mobray........................Helen Grayce
Annie........................Florence Mason
Choloman........................Mekk Ula
Wash........................Harry English
Kregg........................Frederic Burt

Another representative of the African drama reached town last night at the Biltmore—this [illegible] vengeance in the [illegible] Kongo, a fair-to-middling melodrama [illegible] set against an "Emperor Jones" background, and hopefully tricked out with many of the devices that have proved popular in the flood of plays that have come to town since "Rain" set the fashion. This one is entitled "Kongo," and is in part the work of the same Chester De Vonde whose name has meant so much on the repertory circuits. Kilbourn Gordon has written the play with him and likewise figures as the producer.

"Kongo," while it attends strictly to the business in hand, is effective and entertaining theatre. Given as leading figure a bearded and towering white man who rules black natives with an iron hand, a man paralyzed from the waist down and accordingly bound to a wheel chair (or else committed to the even more glamourous expedient of dragging himself across the stage), and it is obvious that the play cannot be without interest.

The authors have endowed this figure with a great thirst for vengeance, directed against a man who had wronged him many years before, and the play proper is concerned with the trapping of this man and his slow wearing down. This is good melodramatic stuff, even though the scenes between the two men always seemed to promise a bit more than they delivered.

Between these scenes, however, has been set a good deal of the stock stuff of the black-and-white school of plays, and it is somewhat less engrossing. There is, for example, a young native girl who speaks the English language but imperfectly and who sprinkles requests for a "kiss-kiss" between her phrases of naïve profanity. (The use of "kiss-kiss" in the play is solemnly vouched for, and the skeptic may be convinced by attending the play.) There is also a sturdy attempt to insert the proper quota of sex, in memory of Sadie Thompson, and there is occasional comedy relief of the old-fashioned sort.

Walter Huston, as the cripple, has the kind of rôle that an actor waits for all his life, and is always a graphic figure. Frederic Burt is good enough as the hated one, but it remained for a negro actor named Clarence Redd to walk off with the acting honors.

He Earns $400 Every Week He Works

And the fruit thrown in is what "Farina" (Allen Clay Hoskins) receives for playing in the "Our Gang" series of film comedies. Photo by Tarr, New York.

Afro-American 5-1-26 Baltimore, Md.

NEW YORK CITY TIMES
MARCH 9, 1926

Protests Against Our Negroes Appearing on the Berlin Stage

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BERLIN, March 8.—The Nationalists, having failed to hinder the Locarno treaties and Germany's entrance into the League of Nations, now are turning their activities against American negroes appearing on the German stage, on the ground that they are detrimental to German social and cultural policies.

"The contortions of these exotic guests has not any connection with art and culture; German artists who have undergone long years of training are starving, while troops of colored performers are getting enormous salaries," says a Nationalist organ, which sees no reason for the Reich to complain against French colonial troops on the Rhine, when blacks voluntarily are imported in Germany for amusement.

Plainfield, NJ
News 3/16/26

LITERARY CLUB WILL PRESENT PAGEANT

"Ethiopia at the Bar of Justice" will be presented Tuesday night, March 23, at 8 o'clock, in the Washington School auditorium, Darrow avenue, for the benefit of Shiloh Baptist Church, by the Booker T. Washington Literary [illegible] was created for the inspiration of the Negro and dedicated to the advancement of world brotherhood. A capable cast will interpret the many characters.

Mrs. M. A. Alexander is coaching the play. Music will be in charge of Miss Antoinette Whiting. A. S. Venable is chairman of the committee. Rev. R. C. Lamb is pastor of the church.

'LITTLE AFRICA'S' SMART CABARETS

Many in Harlem's 'Black Belt' Are Run by White Men for White Patrons

WITH NEGRO ENTERTAINERS

Others Are Operated by and for Colored Folk — Tragedy of Barron Wilkins.

Nightly, after the theatre hour, there is a steady procession of northbound taxicabs on Seventh and Lenox Avenues. The majority of them carry pleasure seekers to the numerous cabarets that brighten the black spots in Harlem's "Little Africa."

Despite the colored atmosphere of the settlement the places frequented by the white folks are run almost exclusively for their entertainment. Furthermore, the owners and managers of these establishments are themselves white. The men and women sitting at the tables and those on the dance floors are white, though occasionally a few couples of dusky hue are in evidence. In this respect these cabarets are no different from those on Broadway except that the entertainers and waiters are negroes. The few places that put on revews stage a colored show. One of these night clubs entertains its patrons with a review as pretentious as that of any of the big Broadway night clubs.

The performance is full of that snap and bang that only negroes can impart to an entertainment. There is a bewildering array of dancing brown-skinned girls who kick up their toes and whirl and sway with true camp-meeting fervor. A peppery jazz negro orchestra keeps the dancers steamed up until they have worked themselves into a state of exhaustion. It is these dusky, merry, hard-working high-steppers and the negro jazz players that bring hordes of white pleasure-seeksrs to the neighborhood nightly.

It Gets to Be a Habit.

Once these visitors get the colored cabaret habit they cannot resist it and consequently they come again and again. "The soul of a negro," said a white cabaret owner, "is filled with music. Take any naturally lazy, shuffling negro and let him hear the call of the saxaphone and the first thing he knows he cannot keep his feet still. Under the spell of jazz he awakes from his natural lethargy and becomes as animated as a young colt turned into pasture for the first time to gambol and frolic.

"Among negroes dancing is not work but play, consequently they put their hearts and souls in the dance and they would dance themselves into a faint if they were permitted to. But, in order to get them to dance, you must provide them with plenty of good, lively jazz music. So popular are these negro entertainers that today some of the Broadway night clubs are putting on colored shows for their patrons."

For years one of the most popular of these colored cabarets was that of the late Barron Wilkins. The Baron, as he was everywhere known in Harlem's Little Africa, was amiable and affable. He was a big, well set-up man, a light complexioned negro, and his white hair gave him a distinguished air. His café, in the heart of the district, was frequented by negro sportsmen and politicians. In the basement was his cabaret.

Nightly expensive motor cars drew up to the curb, where they remained parked, sometimes until dawn, while their owners sought entertainment and refreshment downstairs. The Baron enjoyed a wide acquaintance among many well-known white folks in the city who paid him regular visits. His cabaret, it was reported, was a favorite gathering place for many well-known actors of both sexes. In those days staging reviews in such places was in its infancy. The Baron entertained his patrons with negro singers and dancers.

Wilkins's Tragic End.

His life ended in dramatic fashion. He liked to spend his idle hours basking in the sunshine in front of his café. One evening he was chatting on the corner with an acquaintance when an excited negro ran up to him. The man was trembling like a leaf, and it was apparent that he was laboring under unusual excitement. "I just killed a man, Baron," he said, "in a craps game. I gotta make a getaway before the cops get on my trail." He demanded money of the Baron. The latter shook his head negatively but emphatically, and with that the negro suddenly whipped out a revolver and shot him dead. Thus ended the career of one of the best known and most picturesque figures of Little Africa.

Scattered here and there throughout the district are cabarets patronized exclusively by negroes. Even the smallest of them has its music and entertainers, for the patrons insist on music of some kind. Hence a cabaret that is so small as to be only a hole in the wall manages to squeeze in a piano. A few professional singers and dancers provide the entertainment and occasionally volunteers among the guests help to make the evening memorable.

The better element in the "black belt" frowns upon "black-and-tan" places in which whites and blacks fraternize. Hence as a rule such places in recent years have fallen into disfavor.

Some of the cabarets are run on the club plan and one must have a membership card in order to gain admittance. A cover charge and a stiff [illegible] are often said of "Colored Town" fairly well patronized. It is safe and a source of revenue for its churches and lovers. population. And all of them provide for mineral water, together with that it is known for its churches and lovers. keep people in ordinary circumstances. The churches are inclined to cabarets. Negro cabaret owners, frown upon the cabarets. Many of these away. to cater to their own race, strive to these churches have exceedingly large the cater patrons in modest circumstances memberships, showing that they attend patrons consequently their places are tract by far the larger part of the

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WILLIAM "KID" COLE HOME FROM EUROPE

Pianist Spent 14 Years On Other Side During Many Trips There

JOE CAULK MEMBER OF PARIS ORCHESTRA

Cole Praises Europe, But Expects To Remain In America.

East and South Baltimore long held the pennant for the production of eminent piano players before the entrance of the player and graphophone came upon the scene. No party was complete without one of these music masters to furnish the tunes for the sedate waltzes and two-steps of the time.

One of the most popular of these players in the uptown section was William Cole, 1915 Druid Hill Avenue, who formerly attended the public schools and who received his pianoforte instruction from the late Joseph Ockemy and Edward Peck, the latter still organist at Sharp Memorial Church. Many of the elder residents will recall "Kid" Cole as one of the schotts of Northwest Baltimore players made famous by such personages as Sammy Ewell, Buddy Reid, Jean Reynolds, and a score of others no less notable in musical circles.

Now York Favorite

But the lure of New York was too strong for Cole, so he forsook his fire and hearthstone, and went to New York in search of new fields to conquer. The city of his adoption received him to her musical bosom with open arms and purses, and after a few years he was enabled to return home famous, and bedecked with diamonds that outshone the chronicled glory of Solmon.

Goes To London

Engagements carried him to all of the larger cities of the country, and finally he entered that land of Golden Sunshine and Spending Change, California. Europe beckoned and he answered the call, going to London first as a partner in a vaudeville sketch. Frequent returns were made to America, then back to Europe, and at the close of the late World War Cole remained in Europe.

Joe Caulk In Paris

His itinerary has carried him into every European country with few exceptions. His established headquarters were in Paris where he now has an orchestra of which Joe Caulk of Baltimore is banjoist. The other members are: George Archer, drummer; Bobby Jones, saxaphone; Arthur Crawford, saxaphone; and William (Kid) Cole, piano. One of his last engagements was at the Pavillion Royale, Calle Alcayla, Madrid, Spain.

Entertained Prince of Wales

The Prince of Wales was entertained on three separate occasions at Jed Kiley's Rue Fontaine, thru the instrumentality of Colonel Logan, Secretary of the American Reparations Committee, Cole's orchestra was engaged. Among the many successful American musicians in Paris Cole mentioned, Palmer Jones' Orchestra; Cricket Smith and his Jazz Kings. Ada (Bricktop) Smith who is a feature at the Grand Duke and Louis Mitchell one of the most popular cabaret owners in Paris. "Buddy" Gilmore was also said to be doing well.

To Stay In America

Notwithstanding the democratic treatment accorded him in Europe, the globe-trotting musician says that there is no place like Baltimore, his father and mother are here, and he expects to remain, if not in the city, at least on this side of the Big Brink for a considerable spell.

LONG GREEN, MD.

Long Green, Md.—The Rev. J. B. McEaddy preached at Mt. Zion Church, Sunday morning and the Lord's Supper was administered.

Watch night service was conducted at Mt. Zion Church, Thursday night, December 31st by the Rev. J. C. McEaddy.

Mr. and Mrs. Alex Cromwell entertained at a New Years dinner the following persons, Mr. and Mrs. George Johnson and family, Mr. and Mrs. John Quickly, Mr. and Mrs. Moses Quickly, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Nolan, Miss Margaret Jackson, Mr. and Mrs. Lawrence Waters and family, Mr. and Mrs. Edward Quickly, Mrs. Rachel Gordon, Mr. and Mrs. Isaiah Brown, Ellsworth Quickly, and Mrs. L. J. Pennington.

Miss Elsie Brice has returned to her home in New York after spending the holidays with her father here.

Miss Bessie Brice has returned to Washington, D. C., after spending the holidays with her father.

The Misses Dorothy Gregg, Beatrice Gwynn, Violet and Eva Jenkins and Master Joshua Gregg have returned to Bowie State Normal School.

The Rev. J. C. McEaddy was the dinner guest of Mrs. Alex Cromwell, Saturday.

Mrs. Kiziah Wells is able to be about again.

Joshua Winder is confined to his bed again.

The Helping Hand Club will give an oyster supper and concert at the parsonage on Friday evening, January 22. Ceaser Hawkins is manager; Mrs. Elizabeth Cromwell, president; Mrs. Laura Hughes, secretary; the Rev. J. C. McEaddy, pastor.

Miss Frances Hawkins visited her parents, Sunday evening.

Mrs. Ella Quickly spent New Years with relatives in Philadelphia.

Miss M. Jackson, of Taylor, Md., was the guest of Mrs. Margaret Nolan during the holidays.

PAUL ROBESON IN RUSSIA

WILL PLAY IN THE MOST EXCLUSIVE HOUSES ABROAD

THIS IS NOT THE FIRST TIME THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE HONORED COLORED MAN

America will be enlightened by the strong position that Russia is taking with regard to frowning down on race discrimination and race hatred. It is said that in Russia, even though it is considered under the Soviet rule, or where they say Sovietism has destroyed individual manhood, they have given distinct honor to Paul Robeson, a noted actor of the race.

A great deal has been said through the press from time to time about the talent that has gone abroad from America and that has challenged the admiration of the old world. Mr. Robeson got a great deal of newspaper publicity some time ago, but this was unfavorable publicity.

It is interesting news to note that in one of the leading journals of the race last week, under the head of "THE WEEK," the following comment appeared:

"RUSSIA throws its door open to Paul Robeson, noted actor of your Race, and bids him appear at the Kamerany, the largest playhouse in Moscow.

In America they would term the Kamerany "EXCLUSIVE.". That means for aristocrats only. You, being styled of the servant class, would get as far as the corridor—with a mop. Sovietism, which crumpled the temple of the czar, takes in all and explains Robeson's welcome.

Aristocracy took Alexander Pushkin, woolly-haired poet, to the temple of the czar and made him the great esct of Russian writers. It hid his color for years while recognizing his talent. Kind and true historians late told you he was black. Then cam Ira Alridge, greatest of all Shakespearean tragedians, who played Othello in the private and "exclusive" playhouse of the czar in the Kremelin. He was decorated and went back to England unknown to Russia' common host as a black man.

You are little interested in the white man's fight on capitalism versue sovietism. But you know what capitalism, under the name of aristocracy in Russia, did to hide the worth of black men. Sovietism ushers in a new day and gives the common people, whom Lincoln referred to, a chance to see what you have to offer in the line of art and culture. Russia, in receiving Robeson, told American newspapermen that his selection was due to "social considerations." You are very much interested in the social side of life. Is that not so"?

Waco Censors Ban "White Cargo"

Waco, Tex., Jan. 30.—The Censor Board of Waco notified the management of the theatrical production "White Cargo," which began playing here last night that the play could not be produced in the city and that the engagement must end immediately or the owners and actors would be prosecuted.

In the opinion of the censor board, which witnessed the first performance of the play in Waco, the play is immoral, indecent, and subversive of public morals. Altho' the board complained of the semi-nude costume of the leading woman character. Tondelayo, in the report sent to the mayor petitioning the closing up of the show, the chief objection was the display of a white man's moral disintegration under the influence of an African native woman.

T. O. B. A. Officials Visit Washington

Milton B. Starr, president of the Theatre Owners Booking Association and owner of the Bijou Theatre in Nashville, was a visitor in Washington this week. He conferred with S. H. Dudley, eastern manager and vice-president of the circuit. Neither party would give out any information as to the subject matter under discussion. It may be safely presumed, however, that the program of matters to be brought before the stockholders at the forthcoming meeting was arranged. Prospective competition from threatened circuit organizations, too, may have been discusesd. Mr. Starr left for Birmingham on Monday night.

He was accompanied to Washington by W. B. Arnold, publicity agent of the circuit who remained in Washington until Thursday night when he left to join Mr. Starr in the South. Arnold, though credited with being a time, for he made no conspicuous effpublicity hound, was evidently more intent upon confidential matters this forts to establish newspaper contacts.

Theatre owners and officials on the time seem to be traveling much more than are the acts just now. This activity promises either some highly interesting news at the "Big Meeting," or some mighty capable diplomatic work that must be concluded before the session is called.

"LULU BELLE" HIT IN QUAKER CITY

Story Of Colored Temptress Begins In Harlem And Ends In France

SHE TAKES 'EM IN AND BREAKS 'EM

Mixed Cast To Remain For Two Weeks In Philadelphia Then To Broadway

"Lulu Belle," a sinister tragedy of Negro life in the North opened at the Broad Street Theatre, Philly, on Tuesday of last week with a mixed cast and created a sensation.

David Belasco produced the piece with Lenore Ulric, white, in the title role. Edward Sheldon and George McArthur colaborated on the play. Most prominent among the colored players are: Evelyn Preer, Edward Thompson, Hattie Wilkins, "Mother" Williams, Edna Thomas, Zadie Jackson, J. W. Jackson, Madame de Knight, Ollie Powers, Minnie Brown, Lillian Creamer and Service Bell.

Briefly, the story is based on colored life in Harlem, but could have equally as well fitted whites, tells of Lulu Belle of the New York dance halls. She first lures a young fellow from his home, wife and four children. He becomes the slave of the temptress who after degrading him finally casts him off.

Plays For Policeman

Her next attempt at conquest is directed at the white policeman on the post, but her efforts at vamping are unproductive. Failing she returns to the colored lover. But one man fails to satisfy her craving for affection, and she yearns for new conquests. Her next paramour is a heavyweight who satisfies her financial and amorourish lusts for a short time. Viscount de Villers, French owner of a string of race horeses, sees her in a Harlem cabaret, is attracted toward her and carries her to Paris, establishing her in luxurious quarters. She becomes the pet of royalty and the toast of the music halls.

Murdered in Paris

The first lover, after spending five years in prison is released, and works his way to Paris aboard a cattle-boat. In the last stages of consumption and broke, he forces his way into Lulu Belles' apartment, and maddened with her taunts chokes her until she falls dead at his feet.

McArthur is believed to have gathered much color in Baron Wilkins' famous night club. The prize fighter is said to be the prototype of Jack Johnson. There are but 54 persons in the cast, although advance reports spoke of a number engaged much in excess of 100. Under the wizardlike craftsmanship of Belasco the piece moves, lives and breathes, is replete with thrills and thoroughly interesting.

Nothing Offensive

According to the sensational press, "Society was shocked with the luridness of the lines. It was also given out that local censors would demand the expurgation of a large portion of the script. The thousands who have crowded into the theater, lured doubtlessly, by the sensational reports seem pleased and the concensus of the press is approving. None of them mention the vulgarity reported by the "yellow" sheets.

In the first act she stages a fight with a colored girl over her colored husband whom she has vamped. Critics say this is the first hair pulling fight between white and colored actresses in the U. S. stage. She calls her opponent—"You mustard colored snake charmer, I'll knock your palate down."

"Did you ever have your woman run her hand down your neck, down your spine and around your solar-plexus?" she says as she slowly annexes her first diamond and bankroll.

With the assistance of such campaign slogans as "Kiss me till I'm dead and buried," and "I'll show you lovin' like you never had before," she becomes the glorified queen of the Harlem cabarets.

Here she is described as the woman with "them passionate eyes and that $1,000,000 shape." One of her wealthy admirers tells her that she could take her Saturday bath in champagne," if she act like lovin' him just a little." To which she retorts: "Would you stick your head in and drink it up with me?"

When her Apollo reproaches her for her fickleness, she shrieks, "What about the $1,000,000 worth of lovin' I've given you, baby?"

The much proclaimed Charleston contest, scheduled to be held at Zimmerman's Arcadia, East 105th and Euclid avenue Wednesday night, was called off at the last minute by David Hawkins, promoter, after Director of Public Safety Barry had revoked the permit.

Late editions of the Cleveland Press, carried a front page article by Robert W. Hughes, claiming that because of the anticipated attendance of ten or fifteen thousand persons and the consequent traffic jam at Euclid and 105th, that Barry revoked the permit.

This story is readily at variance with information in possession of The Herald. The permit was revoked not because of the danger of traffic congestion but because of the pressure brought to bear upon city officials that the manner in which the contest was to be conducted was against public policy. This was especially emphasized with reference to the planned seating arrangements, space being reserved for white patrons only in the gallery. This blundering on the part of the promotion was mainly responsible for the revoking of the permit.

Orders were issued to the eleventh precinct late Wednesday afternoon to stop the affair if any attempt was made to stage it.

Inquiry by The Herald office at the hall Wednesday evening secured only a gruff answer over the telephone:

"The contest is off. Ask Barry why!"

Hawkins could not be reached for a statement at press time.

The most audacious bit of nerve was evidenced in arrangement of the affair when Hawkins published the name of Councilman Fleming as one of the judges. In an interview Fleming denied that he had ever consented to act as a judge.

"Why—I bawled Hawkins out at Carpenters' hall, Tuesday night, for daring to take such liberties," Fleming told a Herald reporter Wednesday.

The erstwhile promoter also had the temerity to have announced at the Tuesday night basketball game that entries for the contest could be made at the office of this newspaper. No such arrangement was made.

Another monkey wrench was thrown into the gears of Hawkins' machine when Dr. Joe T. Thomas, father of Maceo Thomas, famous Charleston dancer, notified the Press that his son would not be an entrant in the contest if held. Thomas has been used as one of the principal drawing cards of the contest, the Press having carried a full length two-column cut in its Tuesday's edition of Thomas in action. Thomas is the holder of two loving cups recently won in national Charleston contests.

Along Central avenue Wednesday night speculation was rife as to the reason for Hawkins' failure to book the Public auditorium or some large hall when his advance ticket sales assumed such huge proportions as would indicate a 15,000 attendance.

The answer, however, was not forthcoming.

NOBLE SISSLE FETED IN FRANCE BY AFRO-GENERAL

Recalls Champagne Acquaintance and Promises to Hear Him Sing on Paris Stage.

Paris, Feb. 13.—Noble Sisle, former Sergeant and Drum Major of the United States 369th colored regiment during the war was warmly greeted today by General Gouraud, Military Governor of Paris, who chatted cordially with him over champagne.

When Generay Gouraud saw the visitor he said:

"Well, here's my friend, Sergeant Sisle. When am I going to hear you sing 'Joan of Arc' for me again?"

The General remembered July 4, 1918, when in the Champagne sector he inspected the American colored regiment belonging to the Fourth Army, which he commanded, and listened to Sisle sing "Joan of Arc" to the accompaniment of the "Hell Fighters" regimental band.

After presenting to General Gouraud the greetings of his Colonel and his regiment, Sisle promised to let him know when he appears on the Paris stage shortly, and General Gouraud promised to go to hear the song again.

"Lulu Belle"

"Lulu Belle" the play of Harlem life opened at the Broad Street Theatre Philadelphia. and has been hailed by the press and patrons as one of the seasons dramatic winners. Colored folk are peculiarly interested because a large part of the cast is composed of our own blood and kin. Contrary to other plays [illegible] and God's Chillun," etc. no stench has arisen from the [illegible] those who are always prone to see the phantom of social mingling arising to mar their peaceful slumbers.

It is true that a sordid side of our life has been exposed to the light, but the effect of having any of it truthfully portrayed through the splendid agency of the drama, and that drama supervised by David Belasco, is a step forward. The colored man in now being written of and permitted to depict themselves by other mediums than the song and dance, watermelon, chicken, and dice route. Once before Belasco contemplated presenting no less personage than the lamentd Bert Williams in a serious play, which was stopped by the comedian's own disclination at the time.

As usual some stupid folk within our gates have commenced to throw their little rocks. The latest statement is that Evelyn Preer should have been given the title role instead of Lenore Ulric, white. My opinion is that the association with David Belasco an honor sought by thousands, is repayment in training and means of fame sufficient for us to not be so finicky about where he should like to be. And on the other hand whose money financed the production? At least, PERMIT FOLK TO DISPOSE OF THEIR OWN MONEY IN THEIR OWN WAY. How many shows of cash gaining proportions has colored capital financed recently or ever?

Many Negroes In New Belasco Play

Philadelphia, Pa., Feb. 5.—David Belasco last Tuesday, presented "Lulu Belle," a new play by Edward Shelvin and Charles MacArthur, in the Broad street theater for the first time on any stage. Lenore Ulric, in the title role, was supported by a cast of 123, mostly Negroes.

The play is in fourt acts, most of the scenes for which are laid in the Harlem districts of New York.

Theatrical-1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

The American Negro in Paris

By J. A. ROGERS

Absence of Color Prejudice, Yes, But---

PARIS.

PERHAPS the two peoples who have migrated least are the Eskimo and the American Negro. And for very good reasons. The first, because his climate is best a cold one; the second, because he lives in an economic environment, which, though not ideal, is, perhaps, more advantageous than that of any other land. America for over two centuries has been the Mecca of the job-seeker the world over.

Trace other than superficially the voluntary movement of any mass of humanity—Pilgrim Fathers, Huguenots, Jews, Irish, Bantu—and it will be found to be due, first of all, to economic motives, just as that of our nomadic ancestors who had to keep on the move, not so much because they wanted to, but because they were compelled to follow the animals on which they lived.

Politicians and other "patriots" tell us that the Pilgrim Fathers came to America because they sought freedom to worship their God. That is true, because the God they sought most was economic betterment. Their opponents, Charles I and his party, held the economic power, and in a new land the Pilgrims hoped to be able to better their condition. To this end the ancestors of many of our leading American families even sold themselves into slavery in the colonies.

As the Declaration of Independence implies, the majority of human beings will tolerate the loss of a part or even the major part of their rights, provided their daily bread is forthcoming. Most of us are like the bird in a cage, who will sing as long as he is fed and watered. Very, very few are like the bird of the forest, whose dominant passion is freedom, pure and simple.

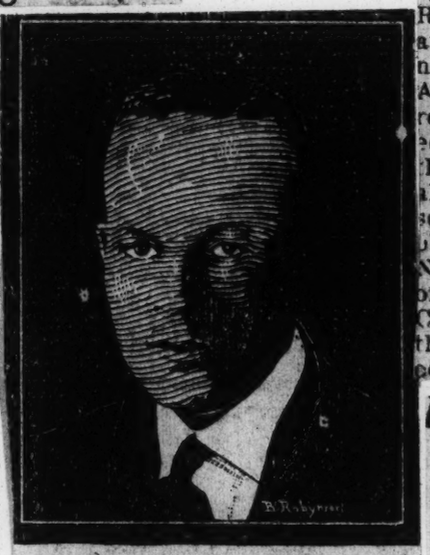
And the American Negro, North or South, by remaining at home in spite of conditions, which at this distance seems incredible, is only doing the human thing. The few who do leave nearly all return to become bigger boosters of their native land than ever.

In Europe, the one and only white man's country, color prejudice is as rare as it is plentiful in Georgia or Florida. But here another problem faces the Negro, or any other immigrant, for that matter—a problem that is much sharper—the job. The Negro soon finds that Europe, with its surplus of labor, low wages, and keener struggle for existence, is no place for him.

Some of the most bitter and disappointed human beings I have ever met are Negroes who have come to England or France, thinking that, because of the absence of color prejudice, they would be able also to get the economic essentials. Such have found that, instead of getting that, almost every hand seemed stretched to get or to take what they have. For Europeans, poorer than Americans, are, as a rule, much keener after money. The American has been much maligned in this. It is not he, but the European, who is the money-chaser. Already with money, he is seeking social recognition. European immigrants have a tendency to accumulate money faster than native Americans.

Perhaps the only Negroes who have been able to gain an economic footing in Europe are the dancers and musicians. These find themselves in a field all their own—a field in which their color is all in their favor. The result is that the majority of Negro artists to be found abroad are musicians. The jazz era created a vogue for the black musician and performer in Europe.

Next to the Negro soldier, the Negro musician has done most



— J. A. Rogers —

to bring the Negro American to the notice of the European. There is also the Negro prize-fighter, but his conduct has not always been above reproach. In Paris the Revue Negro, out of which came Josephine Baker, created added interest in the Negro, as at the present Florence Mills is doing with her "Blackbirds" in London.

But, without any desire to disparage, it must be noted that the interest so created is not an enhancing one. It is highly popular, but it does not add prestige. Their art, if it can be so called, is evanescent. One is delighted by their dancing or singing, but on leaving the theatre one straightaway forgets. Match this up with the interest created by a great artist like Roland Hayes. The Negro American needs to cultivate more missionaries like Hayes and the late Edmund Jenkins and send them hither. And as to the Negro actor, if he is forced into low comedy in America, here in Europe perhaps his only limit will be his ability. What Ira Aldridge did can be done again. At a time when slavery was at its worst in America, Aldridge was playing Othello, he being the only Negro in the company. In France, French Negroes play serious parts with white actors and actresses. At the Folies Bergere I saw the great Negro actor, Benglia, playing the role of Faust's "Mephistopheles," his Marguerite being a white woman.

Many Negro musicians have played before crowned heads and other leaders of European society. At Marseilles I met Earl Granstaff, who had just landed a year's contract with one of the leading cabarets there. Mr. Granstaff has visited most of the countries of Europe and has played before the King and Queen of Spain, the late King of Roumania, the Prince of Wales, and Kemil Pasha at Constantinople, where he also entertained Admiral Bristol and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson. In Vienna he played in an opera in which he was the only Negro person. He is also the composer of several songs which made a considerable hit. Mr. Granstaff is from New York City and is a member of Hiram Lodge and Ascension Commandery. He tells me, by the way, that he saw Negroes occupying more and higher positions in Constantinople than in any other place he has been.

Dancers and Musicians Have Gained Foothold

Rudolph Dunbar, another New Yorker, is having phenomenal success and has played before the King of Spain. He is a cornetist and tells me that he is having a golden instrument made. When last I heard of him he was playing in London.

Josephine Baker is so well known that it will not be necessary to mention her except to say that she has become author and that her "Memoirs" are being extensively advertised now at leading book stores.

It would be impossible to mention all the musicians and performers in Paris at the present but among those that may be mentioned are W. A. Johnson of the Johnson Trio and Quartette of 63 Rue Nemours, whose orchestra is a favorite at society functions at the Ritz and other fashionable places; Henry G. Walton, trumpeter of the International Five; the others being Opal Cooper, Harvey White, Palmer Jones, Nelson Kinkead, and Roscoe Burnett, all of whom are playing at Montmartre; the late E. E. Thompson, former bandmaster of the Buffaloes, played at the Folies Bergere, at which are also Billy Taylor, Bert Marshall and Gay Martin. A Peters plays at Pigalle's Restaurant in Montmartre.

Among the dancers are Harry Fleming of Philadelphia, who is a hit at the Moulin Rouge, and "Snowball," a youngster, who is the delight of audiences at the Casino de Paris.

At the Jardin d'Acclimation, in the Bois de Boulogne, is the Garland troupe of eighty Negroes, a good many of whom are Americans. All are in a Negro village, which is supposed to represent a plantation scene in the South. They sing and dance, especially the Charleston, which is still a favorite in the Paris dance halls. These entertainers have been reeciving considerable publicity in the daily press, and deserve it. One need not be surprised if, at the end of the seasons, some of them are offered contracts by leading music halls. Joe Boyd is conductor.

While in the Garden I met Al Brown, the boxer, who has since returned to New York. Mr. Brown enjoys a splendid reputation, besides he has won all but one of the eight fights in which he engaged, and that was a draw with Seeley, champion of Europe.

Next in number to the entertainers are music students in the various conservatories or under private teachers. One of these I have met is Miss Katherine Yarborough of New York City. It was stated in our prominent papers that Miss Yarborough is in Paris opera, a statement she is anxious to deny. However the paper in question doesn't appear to be so far wrong for, if one hears her sing, one wonders why she isn't in opera. Miss Yarborough is very ambitious and says that she intends to take two years more of study under her private teacher, who is one of the best in France, and then a year or so in Italy. She recently gave a recital at Rheims.

Among students are Andrew Rosemond, formerly of the Martin Music School of New York, who is studying violin; Louis Jones, formerly of the New York Conservatory, who has also studied in Austria; Flora Conway of Philadelphia, who is studying piano; Roland Smith of Akron, O.; Henry Georges Walton, and William Lawrence, former accompanist of Roland Hayes.

"Sunshine Sammy" Heads His Revue At Detroit

DETROIT, [illegible] "Sunshine Sammy" Morrison, juvenile vaudeville and revue artist, formerly with Hal Roach's "Our Gang," is heading a [illegible] company here this week at the Koppin Theatre.

"UNCLE TOM" AND THE JINX

By PAUL GULICK.

CUT" has been called for the last time on Universal's production of "Uncle Tom's Cabin"—and Harry Pollard and Carl Laemmle are satisfied. They have been through more trials and tribulations in making the picture than have beset any other production in the business, perhaps, but now they are smiling and looking ahead.

Mr. Pollard obtained Mr. Laemmle's consent to make "Uncle Tom's Cabin" in June, 1925. In order to save time, he thought that it would be wise to film Eliza crossing the ice before the ice broke up in the following Spring. Accordingly, he rushed Jack Lawton, Universal location scout, to Pennsylvania and New York State to find a likely location. In the meantime he selected the people in the cast who were required for the ice episode; engaged a pack of blooded blood-hounds and took the train east.

Lawton heard of an ice jam in the Allegheny River at Franklin and the company headed for that. A day before they reached Franklin, the Director of Public Safety blew up the ice in the river with dynamite to save the city. Next, the Saranac River in upper New York State was chosen, but the facilities in this little town, just outside of Plattsburg, were so poor, from the moving-picture standpoint, that Pollard's progress in the important scenes was very slow.

Finally, while he was taking the big scene, standing in the icy river and facing the giant wind machine, which had been rushed to him from New York, the director caught cold and took to his bed. He did not mend satisfactorily and conceived the idea that his illness had something to do with his teeth. A Plattsburg dentist, with the best intentions in the world, extracted two of them, and in the process broke his jaw. This Pollard didn't know, and the company, feeling concerned at his continued illness, ordered him to a hospital in New York City. In all the weeks he was at this hospital, no one discovered that his jaw was fractured, although four operations were performed on it and he went through a great deal of suffering.

During all the time he was in the hospital he was making tests of Little Evas, of Uncle Toms, of Topsys. His first idea was to engage Ann Pennington for Topsy, but he didn't dare do it until he found a Little Eva, and the search for Little Eva extended over the entire United States, from upper New York to New Orleans and back to Universal City, where she was found sitting on the very doorstep of Pollard's office—little Virginia Gray, the daughter of the Universal City librarian.

Pollard's greatest worry, of course, was that Laemmle would take the picture away from him and give it to some one else, and before the doctors discovered what really was the matter he himself had come to the conclusion that that was the best thing to do and asked Mr. Laemmle to relieve him of the direction. Lois Weber was appointed in his place, but just then a miracle happened. Some smart doctor discovered that Pollard's jaw was fractured. New hope came to the director. Miss Weber told Mr. Laemmle that she didn't feel like undertaking the picture if Pollard was going to be able to do it in a few weeks, and so he got the picture back.

But in the meantime the Uncle Tom, a famous negro actor, had proved unsuitable to the work Pollard wanted him for, and a new Uncle Tom had to be selected. All of the scenes with the old Uncle Tom in them had to be cast into the discard.

Something must have happened here in the luck, because "Uncle Tom's Cabin" just barely sidestepped several of the most disastrous happenings that it would be possible to imagine. Scarcely an hour after the company had finished the scenes it was taking on the old steamer Kate Adams, renamed the Belle Riviere to conform with Mrs. Stowe's story, the vessel burned to the water's edge. It was the only available Mississippi River steamer of the necessary type.

Then, when the company returned to the studio with all its irreplaceable film, a fire almost cleaned out the cutting room. Important scenes in almost every picture being made at Universal City were destroyed, but not a foot of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was burned up.

These escapes convinced Pollard that he had his jinx by the tail—and now his film is done. A month or two of cutting, titling and tryouts and the picture will be ready for Broadway—some time next September.

The Stanley Company of America, which operates the largest chain of motion picture theatres in the East, announces that its new $5,000,000 theatre being erected at Twentieth and Market Streets, Philadelphia, will be named the Jules in honor of the late Jules E. Mastbaum, former President of the Stanley organization.

Director Donald Crisp, William Boyd, Bessie Love and twenty-five members of the cast and technical staff of "The West Pointers" company are at West Point shooting [illegible] Pathé-De Mille special. The story of the picture was written by two army officers, Major Robert Glassburn and Major Alexander Chilton, and adapted by Douglas Doty. It has been approved by the War Department and the company has been given permission to make the picture at the Military Academy.

"Africana" Opened At Daly's July 11

NEW YORK CITY, July 14.—Not since the days of William and Walker and of "Shuffle Along" has there been such interest shown in a forthcoming colored musical revue presentation as has been displayed since it was announced that Ethel Waters, the peerless ebony comedienne, would be starred in Earl Dancer's "Africana," which opened at Daly's 63d Street Theatre on Monday night (July 11).

"Africana" is typically Negroid song and dance entertainment, replete with clean comedy and wholesome humor, skillfully presented in two parts and 30 scenes. It has been staged under the personal direction of Mr. Dancer, who also is responsible for the book and lyrics of the production. Donald Hayward composed the musical score, and Louis Douglas, the producer credited with Josephine Baker's Parisian success, staged the ensemble and dance numbers.

Supporting Miss Waters is a clever company of 60 entertainers which includes such artists as Henry Winifred and Billy Mills, hilarious comedians; Paul Bass, tenor; Babe and Bobby Goins, eccentric acrobatic dancers; Wilkins and Reilly, unexcelled tap dancers; Margaret Beckett, a scintillating soubrette; the Taskiana four, a natural harmony quartette; Louis Douglas; a precide chorus of bronze beauties, and the Southland Syncopators, a crack jazz orchestra of a dozen torrid "blues" specialties, directed by Allie Ross.

In "Africana" there have been retained the very simplicity and genuine artistry that were the underlying principles of the most successful colored productions of the past 30 years.

IS THE UNION A DEAD ISSUE? ACTORS ASKED

Opinion is freely expressed in professional circles that the Colored Actors' Union has ceased to function or at least, its activities which began so vigorously with promise for the benefit of the colored actor is being permitted to die a slow death.

Officials seem to be as much at sea as the members and the public about the organization. In May, 1925, soon after the union was founded in Washington, D. C., published lists of the membership totaled approximately 500. Regular meetings were called during that year and 1926, the new body seemed to be getting somewhere. In the latter part of 1926, however, and during the present year little has been accomplished, that seems to have been of any concrete value.

A Dead Issue?

The primary object, as stated when the Union was launched, was to effect a body that would take care of its members financially through the means of collective bargaining. It was planned to create and maintain an organization on the same plan as the National Vaudeville Artists, or Equity. It is pointed out that a president and other executive officers were elected and deputies appointed for each section of the country. Other than a few isolated benefits to collect money for the maintainance of the union and aid to a few members who were sick or dead, the C. A. U. seems to be a dead issue.

BLEDSOE OPENS IN "EMPEROR JONES"

Actor-Baritone Takes Leading Role Of Drama At Savoy Theatre

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J.—Julius Bledsoe, noted actor-baritone, who was in Arthur Hopkins' production of "Deep River" and principal player in Paul Green's prize play "In Abraham's Bosom" is appearing in the title role of Eugene O'Neil's "Emperor Jones" at the Savoy Theatre this week.

Cecil Clowly played the cockney trader and also did a good job of staging the piece.

Before the performance there was a concert of folk songs and Mr. Bledsoe sang a Spanish song, The Volga Boatman, Eli, Eli, and the Georgia prisoners' chant, "Water Boy." The small Savoy lent unusual power to the singing and made effective each song which the baritone delivered with clear diction and comprehension of style.

The play is one the three dramatic productions of the Goldberg enterprises for the season. Another "Emperor Jones" company will tour the west. Frank Wilson, lately of "In Abraham's Bosom," will be starred in "Sugar Cain" at a Broadway theatre.

White Actors Star In Negro Comedy

By George Perry

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., July 14.—(By P. C. N. B.)—Regardless of the fact that the best comedian on or off the screen is the American Negro, Warner Bros., who are filming the first feature length comedy production calling for an entire Negro cast to be produced by any of the leading producers, have decided that the time is not yet ripe for Negroes to be featured as stars, even in a Negro comedy situation with an exclusive Negro locale background. As a result they have decided to star two white comedians—Tom Wilson and Heinie Conklin in black face roles in "Ham and Eggs at the Front."

Louise Fazenda Out.

Tom Wilson will appear as the brunette swain, while the part of the colored siren announced for Louise Fazenda is stated to have been eliminated. Myrna Loy is featured as a Senegalese girl, while Heinie Conklin will co-star with Wilson, the "Ham" and the other "Eggs."

Two Hundred Negro Extras Used

For the military background, sets reproducing the French villages and front during the World war, have been built and over 200 colored extras as Negro troops are used. The action starts off in a Georgia town, the sets of which are now being built by Studio Manager William Koenig. Roy Del Ruth is the director while the screen story is the work of Robert Dillon and Jimmy Starr.

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

Says French Have Gone Crazy Over Race Artists, Josephine Baker Big Hit

Courier 7-2-27
Pittsburg

Says Young Countess' Night Club Is Most Exclusive in Paris and That All of Europe Idolizes Her—Johnny Hudgins Goes Over Big—Tells "Joke" On Lew Leslie—Flo Mills In London Indefinitely.

FLORENCE & PALMER JONES DOING WELL; 'HARMONY KINGS' AT EMPIRE MUSIC HALL

The following letter is self explanatory:

Paris, France,
June 11, 1927.

Mr. Ira F. Lewis, The Pittsburgh Courier, Pittsburgh, Pa.

My Dear Mr. Lewis:

"Just a line in answer to your letter which I received quite some time ago."

I did enjoy it so much and am glad you and family are well and all O. K.

I wanted to drop you a line from Berlin during our stay there but being unusually busy I neglected doing so and am sending this before returning to London.

"Have been here five weeks and still have three weeks afterwards returning to England to play the "Stoll Tour" we are a very big success here and as we were a tremendous success in Germany and being well established in England it really makes us much more internationally known.

The Empire Music Hall here where we are appearing is the finest in France and the largest in Paris, of course Paris is absolutely a marvelous city and I am sure there is no other city in the world quite like it. Besides there are so many many place of interest here and many interesting things to see and it is indeed a beautiful city.

Berlin is also a wonderful city and a beautiful city too and we were so impressed with the German people. They were lovely to us and like the French people the "colour" question doesn't mean a thing to them.

One thing I have noticed here in Paris and that is the smartest and best revues are featuring Negro artiste and I am sure it is the popularity of Madam Josephine Baker who has really brought on this condition and causing the French managers to give Negro artiste the wonderful opportunities they are enjoying and I am delighted to say that in every revue that they are in the Negro artiste are doing FINE.

"Of course Miss Baker is still the most talked of person in Paris and her popularity with the French people is positively wonderful, while she has one more season with the Follies Bergere on the other hand, nearly every country over here is after her for engagements after she finishes in Paris. Her night club is the most exclusive in Paris and she has just opened a very exclusive tea-garden, so with all of this you can see just how busy Madam Baker is. She has just turned "20" and I think she really deserves lots of credit for what she has done and is doing at such a young age.

"Johnny Hudgins, the popular and clever young comedian, has made and is a tremendous success. After a most successful years run with Blackbirds here in London, he is now being starred in a fine revue at the very exclusive 'Ambassadeur Theatre Cafe.' He has established himself well in Paris and is also a very big favorite, and has signed a big contract for the new Moulin Rouge Revue for this coming season. The Moulin Rouge Revue is to Paris what the Follies is to America, so you see it looks like a long stay over here for the popular Hudgins.

"There is another young couple here known as Florence and Palmer Jones: Mrs. Jones is a clever entertainer and her husband a very fine pianist. They are from New York and have been here about five years. They are well-known in New York, having entertained for the exclusive New Yorkers for a number of years and now Mrs. Jones has a fine night club in Montartre, and the Palmer-Jones orchestra is one of the finest over here. It is interesting to know that Mr. Jones is a Fiskite, having attended Fisk the same time Miller and Lyle were there. He is a very interesting fellow and a fine musician.

"Florence Mills and her Blackbird Company have opened at the Strand Theatre, London, and are doing a fine business, it looks like they will remain in England indefinitely.

"It is amusing how Lew Leslie tried to produce a white revue and named it "Whitebirds," copying everything after his blackbirds revue and thus far "Whitebirds" has been a complete failure! In view of this fact, 'Leslie' has started a third edition of his Blackbirds revue. He is like all Ofays using the Negro when he can't do any better.

"I hope the time isn't far off when somebody will produce a real Negro show and bring it over here because all of Europe is waiting for this to happen.

"The Four Harmony Kings send their special regards to you and the entire staff.

"We open in London at the big Alhambra on June 27, and will remain in England for the summer.

"With very best and sincere wishes always,

"I am sincerely your friend,
Ivan H. Browning.

Care of American Express, 6 Haymarket, London.

Propos d'Empire Music Hall.
June 11-27.
From th. "Paris La Volonte"
Translated by
Monseiur Ed Covington

Four Harmony Kings a symphony in color as announced on the program is the celebrated Negro quartette.

They are four Negro singers of great musical precision, quite American in elegance and refinement, who form a true and thorough vocal orchestra and succeed in retaining each his own personality in a choir which is a perfect unity. They put some picturesqueness into the music but not so much by their outward appearance, although their mimicry is in good taste, which is produced by a thousand and one wonderful vocal changes; the humorous interpretation does not destroy their charms.

They are a classical number worth hearing as well as and even more seeing, for I may repeat once again, these artists do not stress the point of low comedy, of grimaces, of crudeness nor the exotic.

They are a great company of singers, they are a quartet comparable to the Russian singers and I bet they saw the "Chauve Souris" in New York.

There is a great style in their work without the parade and showiness.

They were encored after encore.

SAY DANCER MAY NOT BE COUNT'S WIFE

Friends Displeased at New Angle

By J. A. ROGERS

Paris, France, July 15.—Is Josephine Baker, star of the Folies Bergere, really married, or is the story of her reported marriage only an advertising stunt? Is the Count de Salvatini, or Abatino, only a cabaret dancer and a no-count that was to play the part of a count in a movie picture, or is he, as Miss Baker claims, the descendant of a noble Sicilian family?

A few days ago three English speaking papers, the Paris edition of the Chicago Tribune, the New York Herald, and the Continental edition of the London Daily Mail, carried stories to the effect that Miss Baker was married to the "count." Later that day, accompanied by Dr. Chas. H. Johnson of Atlanta, Ga., here on a visit, I called on Miss Baker at the Folies-Bergere, when in answer to a letted I had written her that morning she said: "Yes, we're married." Previously both Dr. Johnson and myself had been talking to the "count" who was waiting for Miss Baker in a taxi, and he said that he had been married to Miss Baker. Among the things he wanted to know was whether the papers I represented were in Paris. This question he asked me several time. Each time I told him that they were in America. Our introduction to the "count" was made by Spencer Williams. Miss Baker also told me that the stories in the white papers were true, her only objection being the manner in which they showed her as speaking.

Interviews Song Writer

Later Spencer Williams, well known song writer, told us that he was a witness at the wedding, and on Dr. Johnson's inquiry told us several other things high complimentary about Miss Baker. Two of these were that Miss Baker had saved more than seven million francs—the "Count" and herself being very careful managers—and that Miss Baker had bought a villa in Monte Carlo. The only people who could be found speaking against Miss Baker, said Williams, are the Colored people in Paris. We left with the firm conviction that Miss Baker was married to the "Count."

One fact struck me at the time: None of the French papers carried anything about the marriage except in the advertisement carried in them by the Folies-Bergere. This read in English:

The truth! The black star, Josephine Baker, has made only a white marriage . . . and she will continue to appear in "A Burst of Folly" at the Folies-Bergere.

Truth Is Revealed

Three days later, however, one of the leading French papers carried on its front page (issue of June 24), the following story of which this is a correct translation:

It was a trick! Josephine Baker is a countess only in name.

Has Josephine Baker really become Countess d'Albertini, as the newspapers say?

That is what we have asked the dancer, who received us with a great burst of laughter, followed, it is true, with a little confusion.

"Yes, I am a countess," she told us at first. Then with a little piroutte, she added:

"At least in the movies—a movie play that Maurice Dekobra has written and still without a title, and in which my very nice manager, Pepito Abatini and I are going to play.

"Listen, do you know a gentleman with a brown mustache who resembles Adolphe Menjou. It's he, my husband in the films, isn't it?

"Then how amusing it was to be married ... have ... the city believe that story a little. Ah, how false news spreads! What I told several friends as a joke all the world has taken as serious."

She pouted as a frolicsome child who fears to be chided. "Will the public be angry, you think? It has been so nice."

Her voice became almost suppliant. "How funny it is to be called 'Mrs.', to receive telegrams from all parts of the world. Don't all young girls have a desire to be called 'Mrs.' some time?

"They are already talking of getting me a divorce." A burst of laughter. "Don't you think it would be difficult to get a divorce with the film still unfinished, since I am 'Mrs.' only in the film?" And she concluded laughing:

"What is perhaps true is that that is the best way of getting married after all."

Denies Officiating

On reading this article I at once called at the American embassy where the "Count and Countess" were said to have been married by Ambassador Herrick. "Ridiculous!" I was informed there, "even the son of the ambassador couldn't be married here."

Next I went to the American consulate, where I met George W. Mitchell, native of North Carolina, who has been a receiver in the consular service for 21 years. "They were not married here,'" he said, "and what's more, four French detectives have come here to find out if the story is true. Miss Baker gets a big salary, I understand, and a change of name would make a difference in her income tax. The detectives tell me that they have searched every mayor's office in the city, and there is no record of any marriage. Besides, if Miss Baker was married, don't you think it would be at the Italian consulate?"

"Just a Trick"

My next visit was to the office of the Daily Mail to hear how they had got the story, as well as the picture of the dancer and the alleged count. "I am glad I didn't touch that story," said the editor, "it was just an advertising trick. I am glad that we said under the picture that we got the story from the Tribune."

At the Tribune I saw the editor, Mr. Ragner. "We have lost all confidence in Miss Baker," he said. "We heard of the story and sent a reporter down there. He asked Miss Baker if she were really married and she said: 'Yes, don't you think it is a wonderful thing?' And so we carried the story, believing it to be true."

At the owce of the Herald I heard a similar story. "There was a big bunch of reporters down at Miss Baker's cabaret," said the editor. It will be noted, however, that not a single French paper carried the story of the alleged marriage."

Shortly before I had called on Miss Baker, and she had told me that she was engaged to an Italian count, who **is an artist**. She also said that she had been offered $1,500 a night in some place, Vienna, I think, though people would hardly believe that to be true. The fact is that she has told every reporter, including myself, that she had married a count . . . a story that now seems to be highly improbable, and only an advertising stunt that the management of the Folies quickly capitalized.

Her Part in Show

The truth is that Miss Baker has been steadily losing vogue in Paris. When I visited the Folies I was much disappointed to find that it was not her, but an English dancer, Jack Sanford, who was the hit of the show. Her dancing was not as good as that of many girls I have seen at the Lincoln or the Lafayette in New York, though I heard that her dancing last year was very exceilent.

When I arrived in Paris a woman who knows Miss Baker well said that the account carried about her last year in the New York World and reproduced in all Race papers was grossly exaggerated. The general impression is that the present incident is going to do her a great deal of harm. The English-speaking editors are, of course, all angry over the incident, and to indulge in a little free language you can't blame for that.

Paris Story Verified

Finally, just before mailing this I called at the Folies-Bergere and saw Spencer Williams, who admitted that the Paris-Soir was right. "The story of the marriage was just an advertising ruse," he said, "though when Miss Baker announced it that night I really thought it was true."

In the meantime the "Count," who is only a minor employee in a department of the Italian government, is much worried over the affair for reasons which shall be nameless. As was said, he asked me several times which paper I represented.

Josephine Baker, of Harlem, Adds a Noble Husband to Conquests Abroad

PARIS, June 20 (By U. P.)—Josephine Baker of Harlem, whose vivacious version of the black bottom won acclaim and fortune there, has become America's first Negro countess. To the aristocracy of Harlem Josephine will add her count when she returns from foreign travel.

Josephine has been married to Count Pepito di Albertini, she announced last night. The marriage took place on June 3, Josephine's twenty-first birthday, the dancer said. Perhaps recalling the noblemen who from time to time have been revealed as impostors in the United States, Josephine made sure of her husband's lineage.

"He sure is a count," Josephine said in announcing her marriage.

"I looked him up in Rome. He's got a great big family there with lots of coats of arms and everything."

The marriage came as a climax to the spectacular career of the Negro girl who arrived here two years ago to star in the first Negro review produced in Paris. Josephine became the star of the Folies Bergeres, where her eccentric habit of dispensing with almost all clothing rapidly made her famous among the patrons of that show place.

Now, Josephine dances at the Acacias in the afternoon, at the Folies at night and in her own Montmartre cabaret in the early morning.

Was Unknown Chorus Girl Till She Won Fame and Fortune Abroad

Two years ago Josephine Baker was a chorus girl with little or no prospects of ever winning fame and fortune, to say nothing of an Italian Count. She was born in St. Louis, where her father is a drummer in a Negro theatre.

Her first stage experience was with a small musical show organized by Bob Russell, a Negro producer. The company played the greater part of the time in the South and was known as the Dixie Steppers.

During the season of 1924 Josephine Baker was a chorus girl with the Chocolate Dandies, of which Sissie and Blake were stars. At the Colonial Theatre she attracted attention as an end girl in musical numbers by her vivacity and comedy steps.

When the Chocolate Dandies disbanded she joined the Plantation Revue atop the Winter Garden, when Ethel Waters was the feature, and later appeared in Negro theatres in Harlem and throughout the East.

In 1925 Mrs. Caroline Dudley, a white woman formerly of Virginia, who had taken up residence in Greenwich Village, organized a Negro musical company of twenty-two people for Europe. After an engagement in Berlin the aggregation was taken to Paris. Not having the performers under contract, Mrs. Dudley was unable to keep the company intact, and it disbanded.

Josephine Baker and Louis Douglass formed a vaudeville team and presented the "slave dance," which projected the female member into the limelight. Managers began to clamor for her services and she signed a contract to do a specialty at the Folies Bergere.

In 1926 she was the biggest hit in the history of the Folies Bergere and the talk of Paris. Americans returned home and told of the American Negro girl who was the star of a production in which all the other performers were white.

In Harlem, yesterday, it was declared by Negroes who profess to have known Josephine Baker during her stage days in the United States, that she formerly had a husband named Walter Baker who is a Pullman porter. Substantiation of this report could not be made.

The New Countess

INDICATIONS are that Josephine Baker, now Countess Pepito di Albertini, has made a more auspicious venture on the sea of matrimony than any number of American white women within memory. Of course, Josephine, unlike so many American white women, didn't go to Europe in quest of a titled husband, and the fact that she now has one certainly must be as great a surprise to her as to everyone else. This is a little contrary to the "he that seeketh, findeth" theory that so many white women dote on, backed up by their accomplishments or wealth or both, who annually seek titled husbands abroad. Some of them find both title and husband and are happy ever after; while others awake one fine morning to the fact that they have a scheming white elephant on their hands, with or without a real title.

ACCORDING to a cabled dispatch from Rome, Pepito comes from an old established family of Sicilian nobility. His father is governor of a town in Friuli Province, situated north of the capital. Pepito, apparently, at least, had an occupation and some money before going to Paris to woo Josephine.

THIS NOBLE FAMILY, and public opinion, in both France and Italy, seem not to be chagrined that a Count has taken an American Negro girl as his bride. In an interview, the father stated that he knew of the projected marriage and approved of it, in these words:

"I'm glad of it, for she is a lovely, clever girl and my son likes the kind of life they will lead in the future.

"I don't believe there is any question of her retiring from the stage. I have not met her, but my son has talked much of her since their first meeting in Paris last year. He gave up a job at home to win her nine months ago.

"We don't have any racial feeling over here or in Sicily. Besides, my daughter-in-law is a Creole and no darker than many Southern Europ... As to the rumor that ... they could get a divorce later on if the son thought better of it—that is nonsense. They both know we have no divorce and that the marriage tie and family life are sacred."

... Europe no comment has been aroused, except on the bride's talents, beauty and extraordinary success in Paris.

FORTUNATELY or unfortunately, America has no nobility; but if it did have one, a storm of protest would go up against the union, and more states would entertain laws against the intermarriage of black and white people. In

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

"THAT'S MY BABY" IRVIN MILLER'S LATEST MUSICAL COMEDY TREAT, HAS TWO GREAT ARTISTS IN "ELIZABETH AND LOUISE"

"The Ukelele Princess With the Crooning Voice and Talking Eyes" and 19-Year-Old Lyric Soprano, Moving Toward Heights In Show World—One Is Victor Record Star—Other Principals Are High Class.

Courier 7-2-27 Battleboro

St. Louis, the home of the internationally famous Lindbergh, the "Lone Eagle of the Air" and the home of petite Countess di Albertini, known the length and breadth of two continents as Josephine Baker, the "Darling of Paris" can lay claim to another prodigy in talented Elizabeth Smith, who can answer so charmingly to the sobriquet, "The Ukelele Princess With The Crooning Voice and the Talking Eyes." This bundle of brown-skinned, Japanese-featured loveliness, who is one of the big features of Irvin C. Miller's latest musical comedy hit, "That's My Baby," in addition to being a Victor Record Artist of renown, has the responsibility of seeing that things back-stage and in the ticket office are Okey, for she also answers—rather sweetly, we must confess—to the title of "Business Manager."

And aiding Miss Smith materially in giving the production a foundation which should make of it an Irvin C. Miller masterpiece, is a 19-year-old "tid-bit" of elfin charm, the proverbial "five feet, two," in height, with an aura of God-given curls, two deep dimples in her peach-bloom cheeks and a hale of innocence personified, which stretches forth over the footlights to draw at the heart-strings of a rather callous public. She answers to the name of Louise Williams. The tiny village of Summit, N. J., so near and yet so far from the roaring "12 o'clock" life of gay New York proudly claims this little miss as its very own, and predicts, along with the rest of the world, a remarkable career for her as a lyric soprano. (We're gonna see!)

Elizabeth and Louise. Two wonderful names and two wonderful girls.

Elizabeth (nee Smith) sings "Pickaninny Rose," "Give Me A Little Of Your Time," and "My Special Friend Is Back In Town" in a manner which sends the audience, any audience, off into spontaneous rounds of applause. In fact, after the first appearance—the very sight of her sauntering from the wings, with her ever-present "uke" slung artistically across her shoulders, starts 'em off. And when that voice of hers, with the wonderful crooning tone, sends its electrifying echoes through the open spaces to the very last seat, one feels instinctively that he (or she) is in the midst of a master artist of voice and melody. Her voice, sometimes rising to a crescendo of power and at other times sinking into the veriest whisper, but with always the haunting melody of a ukelele lending its Hawaiian atmosphere proves her power. She's one of the best of Irvin Miller's famed collection of stars. She has the voice of an Ethel Waters, the poise of a Sarah Bernhardt and the business acumen of a Jack Goldberg.

Miss Williams Different

Of a distinctively different type is Miss Williams ("tid-bits" to some) who has hopped to a place in the theatrical firmanent's "Hall Of Fame" direct from the text-books and music instructions of a "small town" high school and a "big town" professor.

Miss Williams has beauty of an ethereal type, she has poise, grace, charm and an appealing stage presence. She is good and innocent. One knows that the moment she walks out before the footlights, and it is this asset which endears her so much to her audience. Education, coupled with talent, plus the ability to keep one's feet on the ground and one's head out of the clouds prove an unbeatable combination. These are the prime requisites stored in the 102-pound body of Louise Williams.

Miss Williams' big song hit, the song-hit which sends her over with a bang, is "What Does It Matter," a classical number. What a wealth of feeling and personality she puts into this number. Although still a mere child in years, she sings with the abandonment of an experienced actress, and with a concentration which clearly shows how she becomes, in mind and in body the character she portrays. The song is pretty, but it's the way in which Miss Williams "puts it across" which sends departing theatre-goers into streets with the refrain of the song unconsciously issuing from their lips. The song has become the hit of the city, and as long as Miss Williams sings it, it will become the hit of any city in which she plays. These two characters alone are outstanding, but Mr. Miller has surrounded them with a group of top-notch stars.

John Alexander, leading man, lends himself to any occasion with the ease of a veteran, and the public is convinced that he is the king of 'em all. He is a fine stylish dancer, a natural actor, a good singer, who knows how to sell a song, knows how to dress, mimic and use his eyes. In fact, he is a fine looking brown skin boy of handsome form with a winning smile and puts his winning personality into his work.

Charlie Hawkins (Adolph Menjou) the Beau Brummel of the stage, with as many suits as the Prince of Wales has the writer's stamp of approval as being a top-notcher in his line. His portrayal of his parts convince 'em that he knows what it is all about. His command and control of his parts lend completeness which leads to the perfection of the entire performance.

Bee Freeman who is said to be recovering from a spell of sickness looked more like the Bee of old the latter part of the week. However, she still retains one of the prettiest pair of eyes in the business. Her singing is good.

La Belle Hampton has a voice of unusual sweetness and volume. We like her. Her rendition of "Oh So Blue," thrills her audience so that the most calloused heart will kind of pause in its beat.

Hampton and Hunter are as clever as any comedians who ever graced the stage. Hampton (the Lindbergh of comedy) is in a class by himself, yet never goes up in the air. With a steady flow of droll humor continually flowing from his lips he is a mirth provoking fool.

The chorus is composed of some high class talent, including Harriet Galloway, Elmira Britt, Slim Hallback and others.

Miller Should Watch Show

The show's first appearance was at the Elmore Theatre. The rapid way in which the show improved and the enthusiasm with which it was greeted during the latter part of the week, shows its potential possibilities. Mr. Miller has a real diamond in the rough. With some closer attention to detail, a slightly enlarged chorus, some new and original jokes and proper background for his feature numbers, in the way of adequate scenery, he would have a wow. By "wow" we mean a real money-maker. Youth and pep dominate the show, and with Mr. Miller's years of experience behind the native talent he has picked, it would be good. However, the show must have these essentials to succeed. Don't overlook a sure bet. Mr. Miller.

6

Interviewed in Paris by Amsterdam News Man
Amsterdam News
7-6-27

Count and Countess Pepito di Albertini

J. A. Rogers First to Interview Countess Pepito di Albertini

"I've Got the Finest Husband in the World," She Says

"YES, we're married," smiled Miss Josephine Baker, or rather the Countess Pepito di Albertini, in answer to my question as to whether the report of her marriage was true. She added:

"And I've got the finest husband in the world." She turned to the young, slight, handsome, dark-featured, and twenty-six.

There were three of us, Dr. Charles H. Johnson of Atlanta, Ga., on a tour of Europe with his wife; Spencer Williams, well-known composer, and myself. The count received us with a bow full of grace old elegance and apologized for his English.

"Yes," he replied, after our congratulations, "I'm the happiest man in the world. I saw Josephine for the first time in the Folies-Bergere and I was so smitten with her amber beauty that I arranged for an introduction."

He continued with a twirl of his slight mustache: "She is a wonderful girl and I am proud to be her husband. I am going to devote the rest of my life to making a great artist of her." The count, it developed, gave up his position with the Italian government to be with her in Paris. He is also an artist.

And so Josephine Baker, whose meteoric rise to fame was the sensation of Paris a little less than two years ago, has created another sensation. Numerous American women have married into the European nobility, but Miss Baker is actually the first colored one to do so.

"Yes," said Miss Baker in an aside, when I questioned about the count's title, "he comes from a very ancient family. I took care to have that looked into, though I love him, count or not. I know his whole family tree, which dates back to the famous Cardinal Celsio. The Count's home is in Palermo, Sicily, and when I praised that city of beautiful villas at the foot of Monte Pelligrino, he smiled with genuine pleasure.

"The Count," explained Miss Baker—beg pardon, the Countess—"is the first one of his line to marry a girl without a title. I thought his people were going to be very angry when they heard of our engagement, but they were just the opposite. His mother was present at our wedding at the American Embassy, and his father writes me the nicest kind of letters. I understand that the Count's family has a fine chateau in Italy, and as soon as my contract with the Folies is finished I am going down to visit them, at their invitation.

"I met the Count just nine months ago, one night up in Montmartre. No, it wasn't love at first sight. I did think he was a handsome fellow, and when I heard he was a count, too, I was thrilled. He came to see me at the theatre three nights later, and one of the first things he asked me was whether I was married.

"I said no, and his reply was a proposal. I didn't take him seriously then, but he was really in earnest, for the next time he had his mother with him and again asked me to marry him. Then I knew he was in earnest, and suddenly it occurred to me that I did love him. We got engaged and he gave me this ring—." She displayed a handsome engagement ring on her finger. "And that wasn't all he gave me either in the matter of jewels.

"Yes, I am just as happy as I can be. I had no idea that getting married was so exciting."

The Count and Countess were married on [illegible] by the pair kept the marriage secret until Saturday night at a party given by her friends at the cabaret which bears Miss Baker's name at 40 Rue Fontaine. Then she stopped on her ring for the first time.

"Why did you keep it a secret?" she was asked.

"Oh," she replied in her usual sprightly manner, "You see I am only 21 [illegible] married on [illegible] first birthday. It's the first time I got married, and you see I really didn't know what to do."

The marriage was performed by Ambassador Herrick.

Miss Baker's marriage comes as the climax of her rapid rise to fame. Entering Paris two years ago, almost unknown and practically penniless, she won instant success at the Champs Elysees Theatre. In less than a week later she was being showered with offers from the leading theatres.

From this humble review she became the star of the Folies-Bergere, the most famous music hall in the world, and on whose stage hundreds of persons appear nightly. At this time Miss Baker was not yet 20.

Her further success was so great that her vogue swept the Gay City. Models of her appeared in the leading shop windows on the Rue de l'Opera; her pictures were hung in various art salons; Parisiennes began to use a dark-skinned powder in imitation of her color, while France's leading novelist, Maurice Dekobra, wrote a movie scenario around her, which is to appear soon.

There also came offers from other leading theatres in Europe, from London, Vienna, Amsterdam, Brussels and Berlin. The Countess had told me a short time previously that she had accepted a contract with a Berlin theatre at $1,500 a week, to begin when her contract with the Folies expires.

As to letters from admirers the Countess has received trunkfuls of them, some from titled persons, other than the Count. Needless to say that in this land of no color-line, the great majority of these admirers are from white persons. Here, her marriage is being accepted as being nothing out of the ordinary, so far as color is concerned.

And best of all, the Countess has made a fortune, which she has taken care of, her closest friends have informed me. She is said to be worth more than a quarter of a million dollars, all made in less than two years, in addition to her jewels.

"Yes," she replied, "I take care of my money. No butterfly life for me. I have no time for that. I dance at the Acacias, a fashionable tea room, in the afternoon, I am at the Folies until midnight. From there I go to my cabaret, where I am busy until the wee hours of the morning. Yes, I have no time for anything else. I used to pray for all these things when I was very young, and now that the chance has come, believe me, I'm going to make the most of it. A villa at Monte Carlo for me, and all the other things that go with it."

And there is our Josephine, from St. Louis, Mo., launched into European society.

The fact of which the Countess seemed most proud, after the Count, was that she was only twenty-one.

"How does it feel to be famous," the Countess was asked. "Oh," she replied, "that is nothing to what I hope to be some day. The Count is an artist, he knows the theatre, too, and he is going to devote the rest of his life toward perfecting me."

"Do you ever intend to return to America?"

"Sure, I have my mother in St. Louis, and all my friends. There are all the friends who were so kind when I was struggling along. I want to see them to thank them. But as to living in America that is impossible. My ideas have changed now. I couldn't stand that dogging around we used to suffer when I was on the road, especially in the South. These white people here are different. They're so good, and kind, that you don't think of their color. Everyone has been so kind to me.

"Yes," she went on, "I'm glad of my success. And believe me, I've worked hard for it. I'm glad of it for several reasons. There's my mother, and my own people. It helps to make it easier for colored folks to get employment on the stage in Europe.

"That Revue Negre at the Champs-Elysees certainly started a vogue for the colored musician in Europe. Of course, many had been popular before I came, I do not for a moment wish to take away any credit from them."

The Countess admitted that she had made a fortune, a fact that would have been impossible in America. "The best I could have had," she said, "would have been a place on some circuit, as so many of our best colored players have. They have had to take a more or less inferior place simply because of color. No, I could never think of making my home again in America after all of this."

The Countess has a Spanish father, and was born in St. Louis. She went later to Philadelphia. At fifteen she joined a chorus in New York, where she performed nightly for $18 a week. Later she danced in the "Plantation Revue" then "Shuffle Along" and "The Chocolate Dandies." Luckily for her that play failed and she came to Paris, where she has become famous and wealthy.

The Count in addition to being an artist is an expert horseman. At present he is a lieutenant in the Arditi Corps, one of Italy's crack regiments. He has won recognition in Rome and other cities for his horsemanship.

At the Countess' cabaret come the smartest folk in Europe, with royalty and the nobility galore. She has played before or entertained privately some of the leading personages of Europe, America and Asia.

The Countess intends to continue her theatrical career. She and the Count are to appear in the film being written by Maurice Dekobra. A close friend of the Count told me that the latter was earning 5,000 francs a week, and that he has done much to keep the Countess before the public. The Countess, herself, told me that she was engaged to him, and that was some time before the marriage had taken place.

The Countess said that she had had an offer from a vaudeville company in the States, but that if she ever came, she intended to leave the Count behind. The Count gave up his position in the Italian Ministery of Finance, expressly to be in Paris with his former fiancee.

"He couldn't work and make love at the same time," said Miss Baker, "so he gave up business. Now he is making success in the theatrical line himself."

And so enter, the first American Countess. The Count, like other members of the European nobility I have met, is unassuming, very polite, and quite likeable.

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Individual Troupes, etc.

STAGE CHATTER

News of Artists from Coast to Coast.

CHILTON AND THOMAS, the very clever pair of Charleston and Blac Bottom dancers are soon to be back on the stage. The team has been in Cleve land as the guests of their parents for the past several weeks. Advised of th couple's wedding, Mr. Paul Ash, who made the team, said: "Wll, they are a pai of fine workers and should make good in their new undertaking just as the did on the stage. The only trouble both are young and you know about thos junior marriages

DAVE PEYTON arises to suggest an apology of this column for its recen suggestion that he was included among those refusing to comply with a reques by Sammy Stewart for special numbers on the Metropolitan stage on in the pit. Mr. Peyton produced a carbon copy of a letter addressed to Mr. Stewar as proof. It looks as if we owe you an apology, Dave, so here goes.

THERE IS CERTAIN to be intense rivalry between the theatres on the south side over the matter of securing good pictures. When the new theatre is finished and with the Grand and Indiana changing their policy to include pictures watch the fun. It means, says one movie fan, "It means a better class of pictures at all houses, just what we have needed for some little time." It shouldn't be, however, for there are enough pictures for all. Other sections are doing it with success, so why shouldn't we.

GLENN AND JENKINS, the popular dancing team, has been secured by Earl Dancer for the new offering, "Africana," featuring Ethel Waters. This team is one of the best and fastest on any circuit and have been compared with the one and only team of today, "Rector and Cooper." This is the second addition made to the show since its opening.

SNOW FISHER is another performer listed in the cast of "Africana" having been signed two weeks ago. Fisher was with "Miss Calico," the Dancer show that closed in Chicago last winter after a run of several months Fisher i popular in New York and should aid in making the show a real hit for th patrons of Daley's house.

BROWN AND WILLIAMS, the record stars, were a big hit at the Monogram last week. They were listed among one of the best billings the show house has offered this season and still they stood out. That is the way of this pair, they did the same thing at the Grand theare two weeks ago. Anyway they won for themselves a warm spot in the hearts of local followers of the theatre with their classy work.

LAWRENCE CRINER is the actor we should like to see in Eugene ONeil' play, "The Emperor Jones." Criner is undoubtedly the best exponent of dram ever to occupy a place in a cast. His work with the Lafayette Players, thoug not heralded like Andrew Bishop was often the savior of the performance Criner has been doing some movie work for Oscar Mischeax and his work i the various and feature roles of the pictures were just as marvelous. Ther is but one Criner and we do hope to see the old boy get his one chance ere th time rolls around.

EVELYN PREER WHO IS filling-in in Miller and Lyle's "Rang Tang will quit the show early in September to resume her place in David Belasco "Lulu Belle," when the latter moves into Chicago to occupy stage space in th LaSalle or Blackstone. Miss Preer was signed with that understanding, so w learn from New Yorkers who were in on the contract.

EVEN OVERLOOKING THE FACT THAT I had been a special guest o the management at a performance of a downtown show, I feel that the occa sion was one I cannot soon forget. The house was comfortably cool, the mus spicy and the entire evening was one of pleasure. It was so very unlike th conditions we had been forced to endure at a number of thetres on the sout side. It will be a great day when we find it convenient to supply enouugh fan and other cooling devices to make our patrons feel comfortable during th performance of shows in this vicinity

"METROPOLIS," A PICTURES RUNNING at a downtown theatre should be seen by every wide awake individual. It is a picture one hundred years hence and shows just what we are to expct in that period. People taking aeroplane taxis, living under and above the ground, are a few of the things that it shows. It also pictures building from one to two hundred stories high. Imagine cities under and above each other and you have an idea of what the producer has figured at that time. The picture is entertaining, educational and filled with fine acting. See it and get an idea of what scientists think of the growth of this nation.

DO YOU KNOW THAT MARSHALL ROGERS, for years an understudy to Billie King, is now considered one of the very clever and most finished comedians on the stage? It must be pleasing to iBlly, for even Rogers admits that the bulk of his success is due to what he gathered from the very clever Billy King. That in its self spells success for few would admit their debt to another whose pay check comes from the same busines as his own.

THE WHITMAN SISTERS ARE a real riot at the Monogram where they are playing this week. The title of their offering is "Cyclone of Jazz" and oh what jazz. The entire billing is one of class. A bevy of dancing, singing and the like keeps the house interested and then there is the favorite of lacl theatre goers, "Willie Too-Sweet," to furnish comedy, the like of which the house hasn't seen for some time.

THE SUNSET CAFE, undoubtedly the most popular cafe on the southside at this time, is offering a nifty show to offset poor business owing to hot weather and the result is astounding Listed among he performers at this popular theatre are Adelaide Hall, Mae Alix, and other stars, many of national fame, including the artist, Edith Wilson. The Sunset is always offering something new and this time they have gone their previous efforts one better.

MADAME BERTHA DICKERSON-TYREE, the noted Chicago prima donna at the Metropolitan theatre the last three days of the present week as added attraction. This artist is one of the most popular in the city as a result of her very capable work in various recitals of late and the house should be packed to greet her. Mr. Lewis, the house manager, is always tryin gto offer something different and on this occasion is to be commended highly. He has secured an artist that should give the patrons a real treat.

NAOMI THOMAS WHO IS CO-STAR in Norman Thomas' "Brazilian Nuts," which piece opened at the Grand Theatre Monday evening is a very clever worker. Another thing in the singer's favor is stage appearance. She is certainly good to look at—easily one of the most picturesque dolls of the stage.

ERSKINE TATE'S ORCHESTRA playing the Vendome theatre, Thirty-first at State street is having little trouble retaining its popularity, in spite of the very hot weather which has held forth for the past several weeks. As for theatre work there is perhaps no better gang of music men in Chicago than this bunch. They are immensely popular with critics and patrons alike, and in fact many have proclaimed for them a place along with the very high priced and high class orchestras of the country. They at leat please those who pack the place nightly.

ROLLED STOCKINGS, a picture which ran at the Metropolitan, is one of the best sellers on the southside of any picture, we are advised by the producers. The picture has been seen around Chicago for quite some time now and still draws well A waiting line witnessed its running at the Metropolitan and still others left because of a dislike for waiting.

MILLER AND LYLE have run into some miserably hot weather for the opening weeks of their new show, "Rang Tang," but even so the show is playing to packed houses at each performance. New York has never forgotten the class of other Miller and Lyle shows and know what to expect at the announcement of each opening. Rang Tang is filled with comedy, dancing and good singing. It looms a fixture in and around New York for a long time. According to the producers, Chicago will not see the show until late in the winter. It is booked solid for the east for the months of Steptember, Ocober and November.

EARL DANCER HAS SURROUNDED his star, Ethel Waters, with a brilliant cast of performers but even so Miss Waters continues to be the seller. Ethel is forced to sing to several encores on ach apparance and has been doing so since the show opened two weeks or more ago. As a single star Miss Waters has no equal and no one appreciates that more than does little old New York.

DOWNSTATE NEWS ADVISES us that Blanch Calloway was a real hit while playing in that section a few weeks ago. Miss Calloway's style of always giving plenty and with the best of her ability has made for her a warm spot

Sections which were in the hearts of all audiences where the star has played. denied a chance to see the star while she was a member of "Shuffle Along" ar being paid for the waiting for Blanche works harder in her new roles than she did in Shuffle Along.

JULIUS BLEDSOE's new role as the Emperor Jones has occasioned much comment in New York where Charles Gilpin and later Paul Robeson introduced the part of Mr. O'Neil's drama. There are those who figure Bledsoe will not come up to the standard set by his two predecessors whiles others figure the singer will show more ability than Gilpin He may or may not but the fact remains he must go some to equal either. Robeson and Gilpin were very good in the part.

NEW YORK
TIMES

JUL 27 1927

To Aid Home for Negro Actors.

The entire cast of "Africana," as well as Paul Robeson and a number of other negro actors, will go to Washington on Sunday to appear at a special performance at the Lincoln Theatre for the benefit of a proposed home for negro actors to be erected at Baltimore. The company will return to New York in time for Monday night's performance at the Sixty-third Street Theatre.

"In Old Kentucky" Is Being Filmed at MGM

CULVER CITY, Cal., Aug. 4.—(By P. C. B.)—Once more "In Old Kentucky" is being made for motion picture audiences, this time the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios and under the direction of John Stahl. To date "Step and Fetch It," a vaudeville actor, and Carolynne Snowden, a night club star, have been signed to contracts. After many screen tests of race actors John Stahl has decided to use a white actor for the part of the Colonel's butler.

LOS ANGELES, CALIF
Times
AUG 7 1927

School to Train Colored Cinema Actors Planned

SACRAMENTO, Aug. 6. (Exclusive) Establishment of a school for the development and training of negro film actors is proposed by the Erosian Club of Los Angeles, which today filed articles of incorporation with Secretary of State Jordan.

The club headquarters is listed as 1948 South Central avenue, Los Angeles, and the officers and directors are: Zack Williams, president; Spencer Williams, secretary; Henry Smith, Lloyd S. Shackleford, Rex C. Ingram, William Kyle and Godwin Van Bunt, all of Los Angeles, directors.

WHITE WRITER COMMENTS ON NEGRO ARTIST

Observation Shows That They Have Place In The Theatre

The Negro has a place in the American theater and those members of the race who have ventured before the footlights are daily making their presence more keenly felt.

It was the acting of the Negroes in the cast of "In Abraham's Bosom" that brought the Pulitzer prize to play, rather than anything that Paul Green, the University of North Carolina professor, wrote in it despite the fact that the award is made on the merits of the play rather than the playing. I am quite convinced of this having seen a performance of the production by the original cast at the Hedgerow Theatre in Rose Valley recently.

Actors Are Capable

"Deep River", the native opera while not a successful stage piece, too demonstrated that the colored men and women who have turned their attention to histrionics are capable.

All over the country there are springing up little theaters for the training of aspiring Negro actors and actresses and many of them have already reached a stage where they are attracting much attention and favorable comment.

Charles Gilpin, the creator of the principal role in Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones," has been engaged for motion picture work.

In short, the Negro, heretofore merely considered a comedian in the theatre, has definitely asserted himself as a dramatic performer of parts and is now appearing in all of the various forms of stage art in a most creditable manner.

Such cheap baggage of the playhouse as "Lulu Belle,' although giving quite a few colored players employment, did not help the movement in the slightest.

Success Will Spread

The success of the few is spreading and promises to continue to spread.

Producers, who until recently would not have considered a manuscript calling for an almost entirely Negro cast like "In Abraham's Bosom," are now not only considering such material but tumbling over themselves in an effort to get first looks at all that make their appearance.

This race is now getting its chance to show its wares, not only on the stage, but in the various other arts as well.

Need Real Criticism

And now what is needed most is severe, business-like criticism of these wares.

The time for the sympathetic, patronizing attitude toward members of this race who come before the public is past—they are now definitely entered in competition with the representatives of other races and creeds and should be measured by the same yard-stick of merit.

This is not my idea, but instead, is the idea of one of the promising Negro representatives of the concert and dramatic stage, Julius Bledsoe, who appeared in one of the stellar roles of "Deep River" and played the title part in "In Abraham's Bosom."

(Continued next week.)

Peter Jackson Greatest "Uncle Tom" Actor Not Jas. B. Lowe

LOS ANGELES, Cal.—(PNCB) Peter Jackson one of the best heavyweight boxers the race ever produced was the first and greatest Uncle Tom and not James B. Lowe, film actor who played the part recently of "Uncle Tom" in Mrs. Howe's immortal play, says Edward W. Smith in an article written for the International News Service.

Jackson's manager at the time was the one time famous Parson Charles E. Davies, who handled the show and played the part of the auctioneer and Joe Choynski, once one of the best light heavyweight fighters of any time, stepping in as Simon Legree.

Joe Choynski today is referee in Chicago. He will verify and perhaps embellish what I say about the poor old chap now dead and gone. Peter Jackson was one of the most intelligent and likeable men I've ever known. Joe travelled with him for a number of months under the management of the esteemed Davies and will understand what I am saying.

If ever a person deserved to be champion of the world and if any fair man who knew will tell you, any man who knew the circumstances of the times. HE WAS CHAMPION because by every fair claim of this crazy game of fighting John L. Sullivan forfeited the title to him. And if John didn't by his failure to just with Peter, then there is no justice in the world.

A GENTLEMAN

Peter Jackson was a gentleman made gentlemanly challenge to Sullivan at a time when it was his right and his worth to get a match. He was insulted in a most unfortunate manner. He could have beaten Sullivan who was not the greatest fighter in the world at his time or any other.

Jackson had to die to have the world find his worth as a man and a fighter.

"DASHING DINAH" GETS NEW EDITION

Olive Lopez Returns To Show To Star In The Title Role

CHAS. A. BARRY MOST VERSATILE STAGE MAN

Composes And Arranges Music But Not Able To Play Any Instrument

NEW YORK.—Beginning with a new edition of "Dashing Dinah", featuring Olive Lopez in the title role, Eddie Lemons opens here, September 19, at the Lafayette Theatre, and starts a tour that will take the company to the Pacific Coast.

The revamped musical comedy with a new book by Lemons and music by Charles A. Barry plans upon a [illegible] year's benefits from the publicity given the name "Dashing Dinah". Lemons will again head the comedy with the assistance of "String Beans" Price. Practically all the other players will be the same with the exception of the loss of Homer Hubbard.

Mr. Barry is possibly one of the most versatile men engaged in the theatricals. Beginning a quarter century ago as a stage boy in a Texas theatre, he has worked as electrician, carpenter, scenery painter and even as costume designer. Although he can not play any instrument, Mr. Barry composes numbers for acts and arranges music. He is also a mimic.

The new edition of "Dashing Dinah" will play Baltimore during the week of October 1.

MUSIC MIRROR

Hi-Lites Of Stage And Thereabouts

By EVA JESSYE

NEW YORK—Reports have it that John Phillip Sousa, band king, will [illegible] for the coming season two tunes from "Rang Tang", namely "Sambo's Banjo" and "Brown". These numbers are sung by Zaldee Jackson in the production on 45th street. The first rendition of the Rhapsody will be given Sunday August 14th in Atlantic City.

Miss Roberta Bosley, well known librarian and teacher of New York is vacationing in Silver Springs. Miss Bosely is director of a group of boys in the singing of spirituals and folk songs.

Kentucky Choir

New York is watching with great interest the Kentucky Choir, organized and managed by Forbes Randolph. The group is composed of some of the best voices in the East. The original octette consisted of Morris Caver, Arthur Gaines, Hinton Jones, William Veasey, Augustus Simons, G. W. MacLean, "Strut" Payne, Claude Lawson. The organization sang two nites of last week with Texas Guinan's revue, white, in Times Square, and is contemplating appearance on the Vitaphone. The group was trained by Lorenzo Dyer, organist at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church.

Prefers Stage To Court

Few of the thousands witnessing the nightly performances of "Rang Tang" know that the agile youngsteer playing part of a jungle monkey in the African scene, also man of all parts throughout the production, is one of this year's graduates from a well known law school and is now pursuing a post-graduate course in the mornings. Lewellyn Ransom, for this is his name, declares he is with the stage to stay and is determined to forge ahead require what it may in the way of sacrifice and effort. It means much to the race that men and women of intelligence and education are coming to the stage for the theatre is one of the most potent forces in the molding of sentiment.

Ernest Morrison

Ernest Morrison, child dancer, and a pupil of Grace Giles, appeared last week at the Mark-Strand Theatre, "The Sidewalks of New York." He Brooklyn, in a presentation entitled was featured in a dance number with the neighborhood gang. Also on the bill was the Newsboy's Harmonica Band, prize winners of last year. Young Morrison was placed at the theatre by Eva A. Jessye.

Carroll Boyd, all around musician and baritone, is now organist at The Tuxedo Theatre, 42nd and Third Ave.

Charles A. Matson, producer, is staging a revue for Al's Tavern, night club in Brooklyn.

Homer Smith, tenor with the famous Wilberforce University Quartette, is making appearances in the churches during the summer season. He sang Wednesday evening of this week at Mt. Olivet Baptist Church for the Young People's Concert. Mr. Smith is a relative of W. C. Handy, well known composer.

The photo of Ethel Waters is one of the few photos of race stars which have been displayed in the windows of the Theatrical Ticket Exchange at 47th and Times Square.

Rang Tang Orchestra

It seems but fair that the musicians whose playing help make the season's outstanding success at the Royale should come in for their bit of special mention. The personnell of the orchestra is as follows: violin, Wesley Howard. Bernard Parker, Lorenzo Caldwell. Clarence Cummings, clarinet. C. Thompson, flute, Lavarazlee Charles Wilson, cello, Alonzo Williams alto saxaphone, bassoon. Herbert Johnson, first trumpet, W. Ramsey second trumpet, W. Johnson, trombone, B. Hall, bass. L. Costner, drums tor and pianist. The music for "Rang W. Naltimore, Ford Dabney, conduc- Tang" will be published by Leo Feist.

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes, etc. 1

EQUITY TO SETTLE BLEDSOE SALARY ROW

FIRST CASE OF A COLORED ACTOR TO COME BEFORE N. Y. ACTORS ORGANIZATION

NEW YORK.—The first case for arbitration through the Equity involving a colored actor came up here this week, when Julius Bledsoe, recently in "Abraham's Bosom," cast began action through this body for three weeks' salary due him.

Bledsoe, who said illness prevented him from leaving home and appearing on the stage in time, was docked for three weeks' pay by the management, who claimed that he walked out without notice, and that Frank Wilson, an understudy, had to be cast in his place.

Recently, the show moved from the Provincetown Playhouse to the Garrett Theater, and Bledsoe refused to appear at the Garrett unless he was featured. At this, the white actors protested and Bledsoe did not appear.

The Equity has been asked to adjudicate the matter.

Booked Two Years With Keith-Albee

MACEO THOMAS

Dashing young partner of Carol Chilton in the theatrical team of Chilton and Thomas, whose act has been booked two years with Keith-Albee. The pair have played Keith's New York City and Brooklyn houses since early in the season, and left Sunday night for a tour of the New England States.

MIDNIGHT FROLIC AT 81 THEATER SCORES BIG HIT

With a cast of the best-trained talent on the negro stage today, L. R. Holtkamp's "Smart Set Minstrels," which was given at the big midnight frolic for white persons only at 81 Decatur street Friday night, proved one of the most interesting and entertaining of the season thus far. The entire bill was unusually good and every act was well worth while.

In "Black Bubber" the show produced one of the best entertainers on the colored stage today, and that goes without any qualification. His act was "something new" and caused several rounds of applause. As a close second to "Black Bubber's" act, the brief negro minstrel show and the comedy skits scored a big hit with the audience.

Willie Glover and Sam Rose took the house by storm and presented a number of the clever comedy skits. They were assisted by McFarland and Lane in several acts.

For genuine negro blues singing, there are very few that can beat Thelma Levine, judging from her performance Friday night. She shows promise of stepping into the top ranks of the colored actors of the country.

An eight-piece, well-organized jazz orchestra and a well-trained, fast-stepping chorus helped to make the show go over in a whirlwind fashion.

"Kentucky Sue," which has a reputation of being one of the greatest singing and musical shows on the colored stage, by special agreement will be presented to midnight frolic lovers next Friday night at 81 Decatur Street.

—ROY E. WHITE.

Prince George Dances Charleston, Baldwin Dodges "Black Bottom"

BY JOHN L. BALDERSTON

(New York World News Service, Special Cable.)

LONDON, Feb. 22.—The proficiency of the prince of Wales at the Charleston has long been known, but his younger brother, Prince George, is not so good.

Last night George visited the town hall of Shoreditch, dancing with Violet Varnais, sister of the mayor of Shoreditch. Today she said loyally:

"The prince explained it was only the second time he had danced the Charleston. The band seemed too fast for him for a moment. He laughed and suggested we start again. We stuck to the flat Charleston, not doing any kicking. I knew the side step and we finally tried that, too."

The influence of American dances also came in for mention today at the opening of Dartmouth House, new headquarters of the English Speaking Union, but Prime Minister Baldwin was too shy to pronounce "Black Bottom." He was telling the things the United States and England had borrowed from each other.

"Recently America borrowed association football from England," he said. "We have borrowed from you a dance with a strange, racy name I cannot call on myself to pronounce."

The opening of Dartmouth House was a brilliant affair at which Lords Balfour and Reading also spoke.

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SINGERS TO BECOME BRITISH SUBJECTS

Layton And Johnstone, Former Medical Students Apply For Naturalization Papers.

LONDON—Considerable interest was aroused in London theatrical circles, this week, when it became known that Messrs. Layton and Johnstone, famous American Cabaret, music hall and gramophone singers, shortly intended to apply for naturalization papers to become British subjects.

Since these entertainers came from New York a few seasons ago, over a million of their ramophone records have been sold and their "mechanical" income it is stated, runs into several thousands a year. Both singers were originally doctors of Medicine. Mr. Layton took to composing, however, and Mr. Johnstone, hearing him singing in Delmonico's in New York, asked him if he wanted a partner. He did. Mr. Johnstone at once resigned his work at the New York University, and the famous partnership began.

At present they are playing at the Cafe de Paris where they have one of the best floor shows in the country, it is said. The Cafe de Paris has become one of the leading night clubs of Chicago and boasts of a patronage including the best people of both races in that city. In fact their unmatched singing is bringing them from all parts of Chicago, and $62,000 has been spent on remodeling and beautifying this popular entertainment place.

Dancer and Miss Waters have just purchased a new specially built Locomobile, which they will take on their European trip.

ETHEL WATERS TO DO EUROPE "FOR FUN"

Earl Dancer And Popular Star Plan To Sail May 21st

REST MUCH NEEDED SAYS HER MANAGER

New Specially Built Car Purchased For The Big Excursion

After three years of continuous work, Ethel Waters, popular star in "Miss Calico", will close her engagement at the Cafe de Paris, at Chicago, and "do" Europe, according to Earl Dancer, her manager.

Dancer, who was in Baltimore this week to defend a suit in which Billy King was suing him for salary adjustment, told a reporter for the AFRO-AMERICAN of Miss Waters' plans to take a much needed rest.

Folk Drama From the South

By J. BROOKS ATKINSON.

ON last Tuesday evening the opportunity for which every muted understudy prays earnestly every day came to Frank Wilson in the cast of "In Abraham's Bosom." Julius Bledsoe, the leading player in that uncommonly adroit cast, did not appear at the usual hour and did not communicate with the management. Actors and audience both waited patiently for about thirty minutes. Then Mr. Wilson who had been playing a minor part in the first scene, walked on as Abraham McCranie, and gave a performance not only almost letter perfect, but also swift, direct and extraordinarily moving. Inasmuch as "In Abraham's Bosom" is the biography of a negro in seven scenes," the leading player is on the stage almost without interruption, and he sets the key of the entire production. Mr. Wilson suffused the drama with a passionate sincerity that pulled together the scattered scenes and gave a lucid meaning to the theme. He is the sort of understudy that strikes terror in the hearts of leading players. As the result of what the management considered to be Mr. Bledsoe's contractual defection Mr. Wilson has been given the leading rôle permanently. His talents richly deserve that mark of confidence.

After six weeks at the Provincetown Theatre this fine tragedy by Paul Green has moved as far north as the Garrick, where it has more room in which to flaunt its beauties. Negro plays are in the wind just now, from "Lulu Belle," which is the most meretricious of them, to "In Abraham's Bosom," which distills the limpid truths of sympathetic understanding. Played by a group of excellent negro actors, who communicate perfectly the individual and racial characterization of the text, "In Abraham's Bosom" is the most penetrating, unswerving tragedy in town, and surely one of the most pungent folk dramas of the American stage. No wonder devious rumors already whisper that the Pulitzer judges regard it with high favor.

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NONE of the other negro dramas speaks with the authority of "In Abraham's Bosom." It comes not from a theatrical workshop but from the heart of its author. In the chronicle of a North Carolina negro, whose desire for education becomes a futile racial fanaticism, the characterization is not to be distinguished from the course of the story or the environment, for Mr. Green has welded them into one form. "Give a nigger a book and you might just as well shoot him," remarks one of the shiftless negro woodsmen in the first scene. That seems to be the touchstone of the tragedy. By educating himself in his odd moments, Abraham McCranie hopes in time to educate all his people and "to rise 'em up" in the sight of the Lord. Filled with the exaltation of the spirit, his education is, nevertheless, too rudimentary to release his noble impulses. He is essentially inarticulate, ill-proportioned; and he succeeds only in isolating himself from his neighbors and arousing the ridicule of the whites. Eventually his emotional nature betrays him into murdering the son of his white benefactor. Mr. Green has told the story in terms of his characters with natural eloquence, fervent sincerity and simple poetry. "In Abraham's Bosom" glows with the purging white flame of authentic, tragic character study.

No less remarkable is the acting by a cast chiefly made up of negroes. Miss McClendon as the preternaturally faithful wife, Miss Mitchell as a purely natural aunt, Mr. Mosely and Mr. Dunmore as irresponsible farm hands, Mr. Huey as a son who is content with the foibles of day-to-day living—are all well cast and forceful. In the part of Colonel McCranie, the slow-spoken, benignant proprietor of the plantation, Mr. Hill is delightfully unaffected. The performance has been ably directed for its contrasts in mood; from the dark undercurrent of tragedy it leaps into high spirits, comedy and minstrel singing, with no break in dramatic continuity.

Changing Points of View.

Mr. Green is an instructor in philosophy at the University of North Carolina. He is the author of several short plays, comic as well as tragic, about the people of his community. Another play from his pen, "The Field God," is scheduled for presentation at a matinee performances in the near future.

In a discussion of the present transitional state of the drama, especially in France, M. Bourdet, author of "The Captive," quotes, in the current number of Theatre Arts, one extraordinarily discerning paragraph from his countryman Francois Mau-

The changing point of view toward the rules and regulations of good society, M. Mauriac thinks, alters the subject matter of current literature considerably. "One can no longer expect the younger generation," he says, "to be satisfied, as were those of the '80s, with the fine fragrance that may linger in a broken vase. The young men and the young women of today refuse to con-

sider themselves in any conflict either with a religion to which they no longer adhere or with the code of morals that developed from that religion, or with those formal conventions of society that are, in turn, built upon that code of morals. Their passions recognize no effective barrier; they stop at nothing. In other words, for them these conflicts no longer exist." As M. Bourdet concludes, the scope of an art that thrives chiefly upon conflicts, as the drama does, is necessarily curtailed by the destruction of moral and religious barriers.

The logical conclusion, of course, would be that when peace does come on earth, and men live in perfect harmony with their neighbors, the drama will seraphically float up into the middle air on gossamer wings. We shall all be too busy singing hozannas and blowing the judgment trumpets to crowd in at the box office. As a matter of fact, the drama adjusts itself to changing conditions in the worldly point of view perhaps more quickly than any other popular art; being increasingly journalistic in its choice of theme, it finds nothing duller than a recapitulation of the sensational thought of two or three seasons ago. And although it may be true today that the destruction of certain barriers removes from the dramatic field a familiar set of problems and situations, no one dares predict that other material no less pertinent to the times will not come to the surface tomorrow. Just now the drama shares the vagueness of this enigmatic period in every department of culture. In the general structure of social relations we are certain only that the old is past, while the new still lacks definition. "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Michael and His Lost Angel" and "Mrs. Warren's Profession," all in the genre of which M. Mauriac is speaking, no longer bring the beads of moral perspiration to our cool, unruffled brows. Only a week or two ago Mrs. Tanqueray's unhappy plight turned up again in a new play entitled "Off Key." For most of us the situation lacked dramatic force; the playwright was reduced to trumping up an immediate significance that Pinero could take for granted as the commonplace attitude of his contemporaries. Meanwhile, the dramatic conflicts in most of the current plays on Broadway are melodramatic rather than studies of character; as in "Broadway," "The Brothers Karamazov," "Ned McCobb's Daughter" and "The Barker." They come to no highly ethical conclusions about life; they are content with a representation of fascinating situations and recognizable persons chosen from the ordinary walks of life. Although the conflicts in "Saturday's Children," "The Captive" and "The Silver Cord" are finer grained in their conceptions, no one would term them moral drama on that account. Rather are they the new conflicts that have displaced the old, and they turn not so much upon morals and religion as upon science and economics. Sterile as they may be in spiritual content, they appear to represent honestly the temper of this era.

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"Caponsacchi"

THE plainness of the modern point of view somehow creeps into the current dramatization of Browning's "The Ring and the Book," entitled for stage purposes "Caponsacchi." For the last four months Mr. Hampden has been sweeping the loose vestments of the seventeenth century and spouting the blank verse of Robert Browning and Arthur Goodrich in this picaresque murder story of Italy. The gawdy decorations of costume and verse scarcely disguise the modern plainness of the motivations and character conceptions. Whatever the source may be of "Caponsacchi," and whatever the form of its expression, we cannot confuse it with the heroic verse tragedies of the expansive days of yore.

In short, "Caponsacchi" does not convey the closely woven grandeur of "The Ring and the Book." As nearly every college student knows by this time, Browning based his stupendous poem (published originally in four volumes) upon the testimony submitted in a sensational lawsuit

At Rome on February Twenty Two,
Since our salvation Sixteen Ninety Eight.

When it was published in England in 1869 it established Browning's reputation definitely as a great poet. "The Athenaeum spoke of it as the opus magnum of the generation, not merely beyond all parallel the supreme poetic achievement of the time, but the most precious and profound treasure that England had produced since the days of Shakespeare." In this day of slender, evanescent lyrics it is difficult to appreciate the tremendous vogue Browning enjoyed from that time on. Toward the end of his life Browning Societies, for the study, analysis and interpretation of his compact poetry, flourished in England and America and linger to this day. Celia Thaxter wrote of her husband's almost fanatical admiration as follows: "He knows every word you have ever written. He reads you aloud to crowds of astonished people, he swears by you, he thinks no one save Shakespeare has a right to be mentioned in the same century with you. You are the great enthusiasm of his life." Nor was Thaxter alone worshiper. Browning was the idol of the intellectuals; to acknowledge his genius was to celebrate one's own understanding.

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EVEN in this plain, hand-me-down decade "The Ring and the Book" remains a great achievement, not so much for its exalted inspiration, perhaps, as for the majestic strength of its blank verse and the tremendous scope of its narrative. To make a play of it for Mr. Hampden's use, Mr. Goodrich has simplified and unified the material. A prologue and an epilogue represent Caponsacchi and Guido on trial at the Vatican court of justice, the one for violating the vows of the priesthood, the other for murdering his wife and her family. Three acts in between recount the successive steps of the murder story. Writing the play in blank verse, Mr. Goodrich has incorporated Browning's lines wherever he could. In the afterword to the printed text by Appletons, Clayton Hamilton says: "I doubt if there are so many as one hundred complete lines of Browning's in the final text of 'Caponsacchi.'"

Despite the panegyrics of his friends, probably Mr. Goodrich would be the last to suggest that his verse had the vigor or the authority of Browning. It lacks beauty in the reading; in the speaking it often comes perilously close to bombast. Indeed, the careful sprinkling of Browning amid lines written by another indicates nothing so much as the folly of detaching random verses from the whole. Browning's genius was concentrated beauty. As his own unhappy experience proved, his verse was not well suited to the stage.

During the last four months audiences have been quietly enjoying this romantically melodramatic murder story, with its color, its crowds, its recognizable types, Mr. Hampden's spacious acting—its frank theatricality. For "Caponsacchi" combines the flowing surface artifice of the old with the plain construction and characterization of journeyman melodrama. But when the modern studiously assumes the attitudes of a past era in a generally modern text, is he not a little ridiculous? Grandeur sound grandiose.

Hollywood Egyptian Theatre Engages Colored Quartette For "Old Ironsides" Prologue

Chicago Singers Featured in Greatest Premier Showing Ever Presented in Hollywood.

(By GEORGE PERRY)

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Feb. 24.—(P. C. N. B.)—"Old Ironsides," the greatest cinema picturization of American history since "The Birth of a Nation," opened for a record run recently at Grauman's Hollywood Egyptian Theater.

In a prologue entitled "100 Years Ago" Sid Grauman, the world's greatest producer of presentation prologues, has presented a picture embellishment far superior to anything he has previously done. "One Hundred Years Ago" purports to show a celebration at Philadelphia, the then national capital, on the eve of the launching of the Constitution, with President John Adams present. Into the merrymaking has been thrown operatic singing by a young local prodigy; two ballets, one by tots; choral singing by the Ukranian choir in their national garb; comic folk songs by "Emperors of Song" colored quartet, and a final brilliant tableau, "The Birth of the American Flag."

Great Honor

The contracting of the "Emperors of Song" quartet, composed of Wm. S. Hann, Geo. Jones Jr., Eddie C. Caldwell and T. Graden from Chicago by Sid Grauman is of great signal honor, as only artists of rare ability are chosen for Grauman's prologues. George Dewey Washington, Fredia Shaw, Dewey Johnson, the Berry Bros. and numerous other colored artists are indebted to Mr. Grauman for their initial start towards fame.

Geo. Godfrey On Screen

"Ironsides," produced for Paramount by James Cruze at the enormous expense of $2,000,0000, is one of the few epic productions of the year. Among its varied list of noted actors, including Geo. Bancroft, Wallace Beery, Ester Ralston, Mitchell Lewis and many others, only one colored actor is given screen recognition. He is George Godfrey, the heavyweight boxer generally referred to as "The black shadow of Lieperville," portrayed as the ship's cook in this greatest of Paramount productions. Duke Kahanamoku, the famous Hawaiian champion swimmer, is also shown in the role of a Tripolitan pirate.

NOBLE SISSLE EARNS $20,000 HE TESTIFIES

Mrs. Harriet T. Sissle, wife of J. Noble Sissle, composer of the music of "Shuffle Along", and today is a headliner on the bigtime with Eubie Blake, was granted a new trial on Monday by Justice of the Court of Special Sessions.

Mrs. Sissle was recently found guilty on a charge of misappropriating $40 belonging to Mrs. Hattie Fleming.

A handwriting expert testified that the writing was that of a right-handed person. Mrs. Sissle is left-handed.

Sissle testified that his income was around $20,000 per annum, and he kept his wife well supplied with

THE LEMONS WRITE

By "The Babe"

Our company offers our thanks many times to Mr. Butts, who entertained us royally with a Turkey dinner at his "Paradise Nite Club,' Memphis, Tenn.

The following letter was received by Mr. Lemons.

"Mr. Lemons, dear sir:—

"I hope you will pardon me for my liberty, but I want to congratulate you for your show "Dashing Dinah."

"After discussing in a meeting a few days ago with several persons present, I found out that beside myself, there are a number of Memphians who deem "Dashing Dinah" the cleverest show of this season.

"We noticed the absence of smuttie words, suggestive movements and lack of clothes.

Theatrical - 1927 II.

Individual Troupes, etc.

"As for "nude" women we don't feel like we should have to go to a public Theatre to see them, so you see it doesn't take unclean things to be enjoyed because your show has been enjoyed by the public at large. I certainly hope you will be an example for many other shows who might follow and may you ever remember pride means an awful lot, and the bad part of "Nude" shows is that our children of all ages must visit the theatres and witness things that are at least ten or fifteen years too young to see."

We remain yours,

A committee of Memphians hoping you an early return to Memphis.

We were visted after our white mid nite show by a company of "O'Fay," show folks who claimed we had the hardest steps on our chorus they had ever witnessed and we had a great show.

Mr. Archie Armstead and Miss Sarah Walker, resign from the show at Memphis.

Miss Baula Lee, is still holding her own.

Miss Oneeda Barry, Warneda Johnson, Geneva Flyn and Antonette Rayford have cast their lot with us and are showing up well.

Members Of Bessie Smith's Unit Write

NASHVILLE, TENN.—Bessie Smith and her company will move from the Bijou Theatre, here, to the Booker Washington, St. Louis, for the week of January 10th, writes members of the company.

Miss Smith has recently added another Baltimorean to her show, Gladys Dorsey, of 531 W. Biddle street, a team mate of Yank Brunson, who are stopping the show with their dancing.

L. H. Hill, of 567 Oxford street, is playing sousaphone. He plays as much with his left hand as he does with his right. He is warning Dan Heath, Bill Lyles and E. Fleet, to look out for him.

Hill says, "I want the world to know I did not have any show luck this season, but that is show life, sometimes good and sometimes bad.

Miss Smith has brought together a wonderful company and we are making a hit in every town we play. We expect to reach Baltimore in a few weeks with our "Harlem Frolic Company".

T. O. B. A. NOW LARGEST UNIT OF NEGRO TIME

Major Circuit Now Affords 50 Weeks Consecutive Booking

The Theatrical Owners Booking Association, an organization of theatres playing solely to colored audiences, is fast making itself felt in theatrical circles of the country. There are approximately 50 houses on the three divisions of the circuit, divided into the western, southern and eastern offices.

Each of the member houses of the circuit holds a franchise on the T. O. B. A. and are supplied with bills of vaudeville, but principally musicals, weekly. During the last two years there has been put forth a constructive effort to weed out the unfit companies and acts and to replace them with the best available. As a result the largest and most complete traveling organizations have found many weeks consecutive booking over the time at remunerative figures. Publicity is directed by W. R. Arnold of Nashville, one of the most astute agents in the business.

Eastern Time

The Eastern office of the circuit is controlled by S. H. Dudley, former comedian and now well known turfman and business man of Washington, D. C. The houses booked from Washington, D. C. are: Midcity, Foraker, Blue Mouse, Rosalia, Washington D. C.; Lincoln, Newport News; Palace, Norfolk, Va.; Hippodrome, Danville, Va.; Lincoln and Star, Baltimore Md.

Western End

Western office, Martin Klein, Chicago, manager. Houses on western: Elmore, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Globe, Cleveland, O.; Koppin, Detroit, Mich.; Booker T. Washington Springfield, O.; Washington, Indianapolis, Ind.; Pythian, Columbus, O.; Lincoln, Louisville, Ky.; Booker Washington, St. Louis, Mo.; Grand, Chicago, Ill.

Southern Office

Attractions for the southern end of the circuit are booked from the Chattanooga office at Chattanooga, Tenn. Sam E. Reevin handles this end. Houses booked are: Liberty, Chattanooga, Tenn.; Palace, Memphis, Tenn.; Star, Shreveport, La.; Lyric, New Orleans, La.; Frolic, Birmingham, Ala.; Eighty One, Atlanta, Ga.; Douglass, Macon, Ga.; Lincoln, Winston-Salem, N. C.; Eagle, Asheville, N. C.; Roosevelt, Cincinnati, O.; Dreamland, Tulsa, Okla.; Aldridge, Oklahoma City, Okla.; Best, Houston, Texas; Dreamland, Port Arthur, Texas; Liberty, Galveston, Texas.

Brooklyn, Wilmington, N. C.; Gayety, Waco, Texas; Lenox, Augusta, Ga.; Rialto, Galveston, Texas; Palace, Lake Charles, La.; Globe, Newbern, N. C.; Like Oak, Orange, Texas; Liberty, Alexandria, La.; Dreamland, Monroe, La.

Negro Performer in Europe Resents Slurs on Race by Critics

Browning Takes Up Cudgels in Defense of His People and Gets Attention of Dispatch

The influx of so many Americans in Europe since the war has had a tendency to make it hard in many places for performers of color playing on the other side, and the virus of race prejudice has gone so far writers on theatricals have been showing how apt they have been in acquiring some of the disgusting traits of certain Americans.

Recently Ivan Broning of the Four Harmony Kings sent the following communication to the Dispatch:

Editor London Weekly Dispatch.

Dear Sir:

I have just read an article in the Dispatch today in which same refers to Lew Leslie producing Blackbirds and teaching "Nigger Stuff to Niggers."

I cannot see for what reason the Dispatch would speak of the NEGRO race in the insulting terms used.

I know of a recent case in which Sir Montague Sharp, K. C., acquitted a Negro lad for inflicting bodily harm on a white lad for calling him a "nigger," besides reprimanding the white lad for using this insulting term to the Negro lad.

I recall an instance in which Lord Northcliffe insisted that his newspaper should not use the word Chinaman in refering to the Chinese. all of which proves to me that the English people, as a rule, are indeed very careful in speaking about other races of people and I certainly can't understand why the Dispatch speaks of the Negro race in such a derogatory manner.

I assure you that my opinion is the same as thousands of members of my race who feel this insult very keenly and will appreciate an apology from the well known Weekly Dispatch.

I am,

Respectfully yours,
IVAN H. BROWNING,
Manager Four Harmony Kings,
Alhambra Theatre, London.

To which the writer in question replied:

The Color Line.

I have been getting into trouble, I regret to say, with some of the colored artists now in this country. Last week I referred to "niggers."

This was very wrong of me, as the Four Harmony Kings—a music hall act—have been saying.

But I did not mean it in any derogatory sense.

Perhaps not one of the Four Harmony Kings has ever heard the wealth of contumely which can be introduced into the word "British."

Charleston Saved Composer

A dancing knowledge of the intricacies of the Charleston recently saved the life of Palmer Kent, Australian composer. Upon his return from a lonely walking trip on Epi Island in the New Hebrides group he declared the natives spared him because he showed them how to do the Charleston. The natives, Kent explained, are still in the cannibalistic stage and head hunting is still a respected diversion. The composer was surrounded by a group of these cannibals who were armed and who were on the verge of attacking him. To distract their attention he danced the Charleston for all he was worth. The natives quickly caught on, seminude men, women and children following his movements eagerly. After he had shown them all he knew about the dance they lavished him with presents and escorted him safely to the coast.

RACIAL DRAMA BY NEGRO PLAYWRIGHT WILL BE PRODUCED ON COAST

Courier
Pittsburgh

Thomas Wilkes To Produce "Appearance" For West Coast Premier, April 18th.

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Mar. 31.—(P. C. N. B.)—After two years of tireless effort to convince the Pacific Coast theatrical and movie producers that "Appearances" the dramatic offering of a former San Francisco bellhop, was a drama worthy of their attention. Garland Anderson, the colored author has arranged to produce the play himself from capital raised thru interested influential friends of both races.

Wilkes To Produce

According to a personal statement from Mr. Anderson, verified in part from Mr. Wilkes' office, "Appearances," will be produced by Thomas Wilkes, the noted West Coast producer, under the direction of Virginia Brissac. April 18th is the tentative date set for the premier in Wilke's local Broadway theatre, the Majestic. The cast has not yet been completed, but according to Mr. Anderson a talented local Negro dramatic student has been approached for the lead.

Wilkes has recently come into prominence thru his successful production of risque dramatic successes such as "White Cargo", "One Man's Woman" and others that have and still are playing to capacity houses at the Orange Grove and Majestic Theatres.

The Bellhop Playwright

Mr. Anderson, a former bellhop in the Braeburn Apts., Sutter street, San Francisco in 1925, became nationally known over night when his play "Appearances", written during his idle moments, was read to a representative audience in the Grand Ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, New York City, April 5, 1925; and afterwards produced and played on Broadway at the Frolic Theatre, New York City.

Coming to the Coast in 1926 Anderson entered negotiations with various film companies regarding a screen production of "Appearances." Owing to the racial character of the play producers have been somewhat reluctant to seriously consider the drama for the present, preferring to wait the outcome of public sentiment from the release of several productions with racial themes that are soon to be offered the public.

Local influence has undoubtedly been favorable impressed with the possibilities of such a racial production thru the wonderful attendance and public approval by the elite of Hollywood and Los Angeles given such recently staged offerings as "White Cargo", "Kongo", "Dreamy Kid", "Emperor Jones", "All God's Chillun Got Wings", "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and others of similar nature.

Negro Material in the Theater

I

WHENEVER Negro material appears in our theater, as it has done from time to time these last few seasons, we get a reaction that is an interesting comment on the realism in vogue nowadays among us. It may be either Negro acting or plays dealing with Negro life or both; in every case there is a special sort of enthusiasm or reaction drawn from critics and audience.

New Republic
5-11-27
New York

When the players are Negroes, we are sure to hear from one quarter or another that there is remarkable acting to be seen in town. People who like to champion causes push themselves on to a somewhat greater enthusiasm than they might express in the case of ordinary white actors. People who are tired of the flatness of most of our acting and would relish something more of warmth and glow and exoticism, rush their hearts to these Negro actors' feet. People who shine by discovering an instance of newness which is great art at last, the proclamation of which will also add to the proclaimer's reputation for courage and prophetic insight, hasten to trumpet the new greatness or the new real artness.

It is much better to enjoy these Negro players, if you like but to keep it clear in your head that in most cases wha they exhibit is not acting at all, to speak of. It is no bette than the usual playing that we see on Broadway, and in many instances not so good, because of its lack of a technical and professional training that might project it into a minor craft at least. This is true, though it does not prevent the Negro players from being, if you like, more interesting, or less uninteresting, than the usual run on Broadway. The problem at issue rests on the distinction between substance and idea, between medium and form, between the material of acting and the acting art by which something is said.

It is nonsense to say that these Negro players are great actors. Such talk does little good either to the art they attempt or to the players themselves. Mr. Gilpin, of "The Emperor Jones," beginning rather poorly, developed in time a certain amount of acting skill. Mr. Paul Robeson, of the same play, of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and other ventures, is scarcely an actor at all. He suggests a fine, understanding man brought to the service of an idea which he realizes deeply and nobly and which he renders on the stage as best he can; but this does not make him an actor. These two players and others from time to time have had splendid moments, instances where a moderate amount of craft, a great wave of emotion and a telling natural endowment and quality carried them to remarkable heights; but this does not make them great actors. The stress in the case of these Negro players falls elsewhere. It is as acting material that they are notable.

Negroes are by nature a superb acting medium. They have voices that are engaging by their strangeness to our ears and that are theatrical because they are moving and warm and flexible. They have flexible bodies and perfect relaxation; they have a quick emotional response and a gift of *rapport* and mutual interest among themselves that is unfailing. They have, too, very often, a kind of simple humanity and sweetness that is touching and persuasive, a freshness and spontaneity that is disarming, and a suggestion of power and force, brutality and abandon that heightens the impression of that vitality by which the stage comes alive. All this, however, should not be confused with acting, which consists of the medium plus the projection into a form that expresses the idea; all this has the same relation to acting that a beautiful voice has to singing. To distinguish between the material and the form in an art is the beginning of any knowledge of it.

II

When plays of Negro life are given, it is not uncommon to hear it said that this dramatic material is interesting because it is a change from the usual everyday American life around us. The theater is said to turn from the usual scene because of the flatness of our American material, because everything is so drab and casual and matter of fact. This may be, to some partial extent, true. Certainly there must be many of us that are good and sick of seeing the lives of clerks whose ambition is to succeed like the boss and to

'Topsy And Eva,' Stage Vehicle Of Duncan Sisters, To Be Filmed By United Artists

Courier

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Feb. 17.—(P. C. N. B.)—Released from their contracts with Christie and First National studios, the Duncan sisters, Rosetta and Vivian, are ready to begin work at the United Artists Studio, co-starring in their stage success "Topsy and Eva." Actual "shooting" will commence about the fifteenth.

"Topsy and Eva" is based on the play "Uncle Tom's Cabin," and it will be directed by Lois Weber, who has also adapted the play into scenario form.

As in the "Uncle Tom" production at Universal, a host of Hollywood's colored screen actors will be given important parts in the United Artists screen story and Jimmie Smith, the colored casting chief of Hollywood is conferring with the United Artists casting director Freddie Schessler (white) concerning the selection of various actors.

Lois Weber was at one time assigned to direct "Uncle Tom's Cabin" for Universal after Harry Pollard had been confined to sick bed. Before she could start on the feature, Director Pollard decided that he could continue with the production and Mrs. Weber lost a very big assignment.

It is rumored that Mrs. Weber will try to surpass the work of Universal and Harry Pollard in the making of "Topsy and Eva."

Theatrical – 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.,

European Notes

Being the Gleanings of What Our Colored Performers Are Doing and Accomplishing in the Old World

By IVAN H. BROWNING

ALMA SMITH arrived in London to join the Blackbirds.

SCOTT and Whaley, with their revue, are as busy as ever in London.

LAYTON and Johnstone are in the Provinces for a month, and meeting with their usual fine success.

HATCH and Carpentier are playing in Kingston this week and return to the Empress Rooms for another one of their long runs. I am particularly charged with sending best wishes to their friends from this side of the pond. They also wish to be remembered to the editor of this page.

THE Four Harmony Kings have just opened at the Holborn Empire and are at the Empire, Croydon, this week. They play the Victoria Palace next week, with the Alhambra to follow.

JIM and Jack, the two dancing boys, have finished the Stoll tour and are on their way to Leipsig, where they open at the Crystal Palace. At the conclusion of their engagement here they go to the Scala, Berlin, Germany. These boys do a clever act indeed.

THE Versatile Three are playing the Hippodrome, Birmingham, and are as popular as ever on the Gulliver tour.

WILLIAMS and Taylor are doing fine, as usual, and this week they are at the Hippodrome, Brighton. They return to London Monday and play the big Victoria Palace next week and will be on the same bill with the Four Harmony Kings.

THE Black Bottom has hit London and everybody is trying to do it. In all probability it will be as popular as the Charleston over here. The latest joke here is that Lew Leslie is said to be telling people on this side that he is the creator of the dance and introduced it to the people of the United States. I hope Alberta Hunter will read these few lines and act accordingly.

OPAL COOPER and Leslie Hutchinson have opened at the popular Cafe de Paris and are a real hit. Cooper and Hutchinson are well known in America. These boys are splendid artists and Hutchinson has been studying in Paris for some time and has developed a very fine baritone voice. Great harmonists, and since opening have entertained His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, several times.

THE Blackbirds are still knocking them cold at the London Pavilion and the second edition is a big success. Edith Wilson is leading a Black Bottom number and it is "too bad." The Three Eddies are real favorites and Johnnie Hudgins is making them rock with laughter. There is only one Hudgins, and, as they say over here, he has really ARRIVED. They are still talking about his wonderful success at the big Charleston Ball recently, at which time he made thousands of Britishers cry for more. A clever boy indeed.

London, Eng.,
January 24th, 1927.

MR. ROMEO L. DOUGHERTY,
Dramatic Editor N. Y. Amsterdam News,
New York City.

My Good Friend Romeo:

I trust that this will find you well and fine as usual. I intended writing you during the holidays, but, upon my word, it was the busiest time I have experienced in a long while.

We are all fine as ever over here and just as busy as can be. The new year has started out great for us and it looks like another big year for all the colored acts in Europe.

Blackbirds are still doing capacity business and the new or second edition of the revue is exceptionally good. It really seems as if these people have gone wild over colored artists at this time and if ever a good Negro show comes to England it will be a sensation. There are many Negro acts here now and they are all doing nicely.

Enclosed you will find a copy of a free scholarship for two youn, singers offered by Professor Louis Drysdale, a race teacher here in London, and it is a great opportunity for the ones who will be lucky enough to be selected. I am hoping that the Amsterdam News will help in this matter and a reproduction of the scholarship will go a long way towards arousing the interest of ambitious young singers. Hoping that this will reach you in due course and that through the Amsterdam News two singers will be selected, and with best wishes to you for continued success and cheerio to everybody, I am,

Sincerely,
(Signed) IVAN H. BROWNING.
With the Four Harmony Kings.

OUR object in reproducing the above letter is for the information it carries concerning our performers and the splendid offer made by one of the leading teachers in Europe. Mr. Browning's European Notes to this paper are widely read and looked for by many people on this side and we hope he does not keep us waiting so long before writing again.

IF for nothing else than the splendid work the Four Harmony Kings did with "Shuffle Along" and the "Chocolate Dandies," hundreds will be glad to learn of their activities in European countries. Complying with Mr. Browning's request, we are reproducing below the scholarship as outlined and fostered by Miss Florence Mills, Mr. Browning and John Payne.

11 Westbourne Road,
Forest Hill, London, S. E. 23

Grotrian Hall Studio,
115 Wigmore St., London, W. 1

LOUIS DRYSDALE'S
FREE VOCAL SCHOLARSHIP
FOR
SOPRANO AND CONTRALTO

On behalf of my Race and in consequence of an appeal made to me by several of my American students I am offering two ladies

A Free Scholarship of
Two Years' Complete Vocal Training

Each student to receive two years' complete training of Voice Production and Singing in the true Italian method (Bel Canto), comprising several lessons eaoh week.

Repertoire:
ENGLISH—ITALIAN—FRENCH—GERMAN

Conditions of Scholarship.

1. Those selected must be promising, refined, of good stage appearance, musically intelligent, and in order that they may receive the fullest benefits:—that is, very opportunity to practice and study, together with the advantages of hearing advanced students and the help of Mrs. Drysdale as accompanist, they must be prepared to live at the residence of Professor and Mrs. Drysdale, for which a charge of £3/0/0 ($15) per week each will be made for full board-residence.

2. At completion of scholarship or at any time as Professor Drysdale thinks fit a joint recital will be arranged for both students at a London concert hall.

(Signed) FLORENCE MILLS,
London Pavilion.
IVAN H. BROWNING,
6 Haymarket American Express,
London, England.
JOHN PAYNE.
17 Regents Park Rd., N. W. 1,
London.

LONDON MOVES TO BAR NEGRO REVUES

A copyright dispatch to the Herald-Tribune from its London bureau says that "an effort to draw a color line on the London stage is to be made by the Variety Artists Federation. The federation has no objection to individual turns by Negro actors, but intends to ask the government to refuse permission for such companies as 'The Black Birds' to perform in England."

And here is another Negro musical show being prepared. This one, title "Rang Tang," will have Miller and Lyles heading the cast. The production is scheduled to open Tuesday July 12, at Chanin's Royale Theatre. Kay Gunt wrote the book, Ford Dabney the music and Jo Trent the lyrics.

NUDE GIRL IN WHITE CLUB'S CELEBRATION

Colored Girl Used In Travesty On Earl Carroll's Affair.

ATLANTA, Ga., Feb. 2. (Special) The Fulton County grand jury Wednesday was ordered to investigate an alleged "bath-tub party" given in honor of Dr. Earl Langknect (white) of Kansas City, international president of the Co-Operative Clubs, at a downtown hotel. Solicitor General John Boykin declared liquor was served and that a nude colored girl, ranging in age given by witnesses from two to sixteen years, was revealed as the occupant of the bathtub when the screen was pulled away.

The "party" was intended as a travesty on Earl Carroll's affair, Boykin declared. Among the witnesses summoned were Walter Candler and Winfield P. Jones, Atlanta capitalists.

Napoleon Whiting Joins "Sunshine Sammy" on Stage

Sunshine Sammy and Napoleon Whiting, the St. Louis boy who left here two months ago, to become his partner, were guests of honor at the residence of Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Rowe, 4354 West Belle, during their engagement at the Grand last week. Sammy entertained the guests with a description of his movie experiences. Mrs. Carrie M. Leatherwood, mother of Napoleon, has signed a two-year contract for the boy to work with Sammy. The team is now showing in Chicago. They may return to St. Louis this summer for their vacation before the regular season opens.

A Twentieth Century "Uncle Tom's Cabin"

A melodrama furnishing sidelights on the Negro problem in the South of the present day, as far-reaching as Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," on slave conditions, is being presented at the Mayfair Theatre under the title "The Bottom of the Cup." The play was to have presented Charles Gilpin, of "The Emperor Jones" fame, in the leading role, but on account of his sudden illness the part is being acted by Daniel L. Haynes, who, on two days' notice and without ever having appeared on the stage before as an actor, may have leaped into fame at one bound. More of Haynes later.

There are several remarkable things about "The Bottom of the Cup." To begin with, it was written by John Tucker Battle and William J. Perlman, the former hailing from the State of Texas; but there is nothing remarkable about this circumstance until one sees that the play holds up to public gaze many of the inconsistencies of Southern whites on social equality, mob rule, Negro education [illegible]

Mammy Lou, who has long been in the service of Colonel Fitzhugh, has two sons, Charles and Willis Thompson. Haynes is cast as Charles. Colonel Fitzhugh has a daughter, Rosalie, who falls in love with shell-shocked, gassed, dope-addicted Robert Kinney. As the curtain rises Rosalie has just been turned out by her father, because she is soon to become the mother of an illegitimate child, the father of whom is unknown to her father, else he would have killed him. Rosalie finds refuge in Mammy Lou's humble cabin.

"Charlie," whom the Colonel had sent North to college, returns to the Mississippi Delta on the very day his brother Willis and Kinney—the latter the son of a wealthy father who, upon his death, kept him out of his inheritance until he should attain the age of 30—commit a murder during a local bank robbery.

Soon after Charlie reaches his mother's cabin and is greeted by her and by the Colonel, the Sheriff and a posse come in quest of Willis, whom someone had seen running away from the scene of the crime. But just before they arrived Willis had entered the cabin while Mammy Lou was in the other room attending to Rosalie and, depositing the swag in the corner of the room, ran out.

Charlie gave a good account of his movements after his arrival and, following the searhing of his suit case—overlooking the bag left by Willis—the posse departed.

Suspicion is directed towards Kinney and he, in turn, leads the posse to Mammy Lou's cabin where Willis, exhausted from his futile attempt to escape the bloodhounds, has returned and taken refuge. The door is opened to the posse by Charlie, who implores it not to lynch his brother, but to give him a trial. Willis, protesting that he did not fire the shot, and on the verge of making a clean breast of the robbery and murder, which would have implicated Kinney, the real murderer, is shot down by the latter.

The Sheriff's official report is to the effect that Willis was shot while resisting arrest—the identical sort of lie the country has come to be familiar with.

Meanwhile, Rosalie's day of confinement approaches and Charlie, much against the admonition of his mother to 'stay out of de white folks' business" sends for Kinney in the hope that he will be able to persuade him to marry Rosalie and effect a reconciliation between her and her father.

Kinney comes to the cabin, believing that Charlie intends to blackmail him, and offers to give him the million or more dollars needed to found his college for Negroes in exchange for his secrecy. They have some pretty scorching words and Charlie takes Kinney's revolver and dope needle away from him and puts them in his pocket. Kinney is a little later prevailed upon to go in to Rosalie.

But Kinney's connection with the robbery will not down; and an autopsy having proven that the fatal shot was not fired from Willis' gun, and with the aditional knowledge that the only known weapon it could have come from was owned by Kinney, the Sheriff returns

[Wide World Photo.]

COLORED GIRL BECOMES ITALIAN COUNTESS.

The Countess di Albertini, who was formerly Josephine Baker of New York, getting driving license in Paris.

JOSEPHINE BAKER COUNTESS FOR A DAY, DISCOUNTED

Name of Her Alleged Husband Not in Social Register, or Page Torn Out.

Josephine Baker, soubrette of Seventh and T streets, Lenox avenue, and the Montmartre, Paris, just won't quit being the international sensation, according to press dispatches seeking a variation of the Lindbergh and Byrd-Hop publicity of a week since. Miss Baker, noted for going for place without, when "unmentionables" were in question as the vogue of her Parisian stage costume, will probably go on performing whether her count has title or not.

Papers of Paris and Rome state that the count whom she stated she had married has no mention in the nobility lists. No record has been discovered of the alleged marriage, so that it appears that the American colored girl has pulled some $100,000 worth of advertisement out of unsuspecting publicity men, and got away with the murder.

Beppe, or Reppino de Abatino, son of Col. Francesco de Abatino, of Palermo, who was a clerk in Rome before going to Paris, is or is not married to Miss Baker. For more than a year, he was manager of her cabaret in the Montmartre where she did the famous Bird-Hop dance clothed in some feathers and trans-Atlantic fluffery. There has been some credence given the explanation that the marriage, in New York parlance, would be comprehended in the common law.

News of the alleged marriage into the nobility has caused recurrence of talk concerning the marriage of Napoleon I to Josephine LeClerc, a colored woman of the Dominican Islands, who became the famous Empress Josephine. It is understood that Miss Baker is to be called "countess" during the early hours of the evening, while on the boards at the theater in Paris where she has been jacking them in for more than a year.

But in the later hours of the morning, after a sufficient amount of the genuine Parisian vintage has been consumed at her Montmartian cabaret, she is under no circumstances to be referred to as countess, but as "Empress Josephine." She has already given as her precedent the ennobling of Mrs. A. E. Malone, of St. Louis, as the "Poro Queen," and the crowning of Watkins, of North Carolina, as "king" in the movie and Elk world, at the Lincoln Colonnade a few years ago.

FREE PRESS
DETROIT, MICH.
MAY 8 1927

NEGRO, PAST 80, WRITES SCENARIOS

'Fabe' Martin Is Familiar Figure on Dowagiac Streets.

Special to The Free Press.

Dowagiac, Mich., May 7.—As familiar as the old landmarks that dot Dowagiac's business district—seeming almost a part of them—is "Fabe" Martin, a Negro who is beginning to show his more than 80 years. A fair day finds him seated or leaning in a place of vantage in the center of the business district, and to everywhere he is known as "Fabe," a friendly, interesting, kindly soul.

And yet there is scarcely anyone who really knows old Fabe. He talks freely of the affairs of pre-Civil war days, of the Rebellion in which he fought on the Northern side, and the trying post bellum days; from his vast memory store he tells of his associations with some of the great men of the generation just past, or passing—but never a word about his age or of his personal life.

Many have read his poems, which have been published rather widely over the nation, but few there are who know that this man, now slightly stooped, and who must be nearer to 90 years than 80, still writes movie scenarios that are being accepted.

Few of this generation are aware that Fabe's father, W. C. Martin, was a leader of his in Michigan in the middle of the last century.

And so he lives, simply, peacefully, comfortably on his war pension and the income from his writings, trying to make his community a little better for his living in it.

Theatrical — 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

Paul Robeson Greatest Exponent Of Spirituals

Former All-American Star, Actor And Lawyer Has Important Part In New Play By Edna Ferber.

NEW YORK, May 5. — Devotees of modern fiction, who have read Carl Van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" and casual visitors to New York of the type who is immediately attracted to the sight-seeing bus, have but recently become aware of Harlem, that huge, wealthy Negro colony in the heart of America's metropolis. To them, it is the birthplace of jazz, a treasure house of local color from which aspiring authors may pick a new jewel with which to momentarily startle the sensation-loving but bored Twentieth Century.

To the serious mind, more interested in the solution of inter-racial problems than in the literary exploitation of the colored race. Harlem has existed as the center of the Negro Renaissance, that astounding movement which has brought to light many appreciable contributions to America's belles lettres and arts. The Negro's intellectual and artistic advance, all of which Harlem typifies, is, perhaps, best interpreted in Alain Lock's book "The New Negro," as compilation of apologetics, critical essays, poetry and drama, all the product of a Negro pen.

Paul Robeson

Symbolic of "the new Negro," but sixty-odd years remote from slavery abuse and inhuman oppression, Paul Robeson looms large. The son of a minister father, himself born in slavery, Robeson typifies the hopeful advance which his race is making despite the cruel and needless limitations still imposed upon it by a country whose greatest claim to greatness is its lip service to the ideal of democracy. Up to 1915, the year he entered Rutgers College, Robeson's life was probably that of the average colored boy. Thereafter, his record has been one of remarkable achievement.

In college, he won the freshman, sophomore and junior prizes in oratory and the senior prize for extemporaneous speaking. He was awarded a Phi Beta Kappa key in his junior year, and was initiated in the senior year into the Society of Cap and Skull in his last year. He played football three years, baseball two years, in his junior year competed in track, thus winning the coveted title of "four letter man." Walter Camp singled him out in 1917 and again in 1918 by choosing him for All-American football end.

Not content with the A. B. received at Rutgers, Robeson entered the Columbia University Law School from which he was graduated with honors in 1923. Subsequent difficulty in developing a legal practice turned Robeson to the drama in which he first became interested as a Columbia student. The Provincetown Theater 1924 revival of Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones," first saw Paul Robeson on the professional stage. His interpretation of "brutus Jones" created nothing short of a furore and moved the critical Alexander Wolcott to write "Robeson adds to his extraordinary physique a shrewd, rich understanding and a voice that is unmatched in the American theater. This dusky giant unleashed provides the kind of an evening you remember all your life."

Has New Role

Following his New York dramatic debut which every metropolitan critic acclaimed, Robeson appeared in O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and the following year went London with "Emperor Jones." Dramatic criticism equal in enthusiastic applause to all his American critiques, characterized Robeson's London performances.

This fall, Robeson appeared in "Black Boy," a New York production sponsored by Horace Liveright, the American publisher. His third role won for him renewed applause from the metropolitan press.

At the present moment, he is on the threshold of a new dramatic venture. Rehearsals for a musical version of Edna Ferber's "Show Boat" are now under way and Robeson has been selected for an important role, a part in which he can do ample justice to both his histrionic powers as well as to his singing voice.

For, strange as it may seem, Paul Robeson is more famed for his interpretations of Negro spirituals than anyone who has yet publicly aspired to reproduce all of the faith, the tragedy and the spiritual resignation which those songs were intended to express. His voice has frequently been compared to Chaliapin's. Between dramatic seasons, he has appeared all over the country with Lawrence Brown, the noted composer and arranger of Negro music, and has never failed to hold his audience in complete awe. Robeson and Brown were the first to present an entire program of Negro music and their success undoubtedly explains the almost immediate recognition which has been accorded to the spirituals throughout this country and abroad.

Exponent of Spiritual

Conservative musical critics have been as extravagant in praising Robeson as dramatic critics were. New York, Chicago and Boston musical columns all herald him as the perfect exponent of the spiritual. Of his vocal ability, Elizabeth Shepley Sergeant says:

"Robeson's voice has been described as a 'bass-baritone.' It has perfect pace and enunciation and has been well placed and cultivated just enough—not too much—for the faithful adherence to primitive tradition. Robeson's rendering of the spirituals, with the expert and exciting accompaniment and transcription of Lawrence Brown, is less etheralized than that of Roland Hayes, who is, technically speaking, a more finished artist. But Robeson's seems to contain more of the background, more of the associations both in a racial and a musical sense, more of the artless majesty of the originals. These spirituals, primarily intended for choral singing, are a high test of the individual performer, who must render not only the melodies, but in his accompaniment the harmonies, and in addition convey undertones and overtones that can never be transcribed at all. Robeson's interpretation does just this, with no lapse into the jazzed effects and the Russian harmonies that have crept into the spirituals, both in stage and in choral singing, of late years."

COUNT RIGHT ON

Press dispatches this week have indicated that Josephine Baker has a count. It has not yet appeared that he is a noble count. Nor has it appeared that he is an ignoble one. His ancestry is as good as that of the Baker's, and that is all that the gay colored Parisian ex-Washingtonian and Harlemite cares now or has cared in the past.

If Miss Baker, or Mrs. D'Abatino, has a title or not, is a question which The Eagle cannot decide offhand. We have been reasonably certain that M. Beppo, or Peppino, has been counting the Baker coin for the past twelfthmonth, and knowing the countess of the night life as we do, we believe that she has been counting right on behind him.

Shall we discount the count? Not so. It is superbly none of our business. If Miss Baker is satisfied, in her own mind, that she has a count, with or without title of nobility as shown by the registers, why should we lift the wool that she has the decency to draw over her own eyes. Why, especially, when this wool represents more than ninety-nine per cent of the veil which Miss Baker draws over her Thespian peccadilloes.

Whatever the Nordics say, think, feel, represent, or publish, as long as Miss Baker asserts that the count counts as a count should count, we are willing to call her countess. Whether or not she shall be just that is a profound test of solidarity of the race. Lindbergh was made a colonel and received the Distinguished Service Medal for the first trans-Atlantic flight. Miss Baker, infinitely more flighty, could not marry a mere colonel, which designation is little more than a Southern sobriquet. Let her have her count.

ETHIOPIAN ART ADVANCES TO NINE PLAYS IN SEASON

And Joseph Mulvaney, Writing in the New York American, Gives His Impressions on What Has Taken Place.

With the winning of the Pulitzer prize by "In Abraham's Bosom," now in revival at the Provincetown Playhouse, the development of Ethiopian activity in American drama is attracting wide attention.

Nine productions have been given on Broadway with companies composed completely or in part of Negro actors. In several instances black playwrights have written the dramas and directed the presentations.

"Goat Alley" was next to the last of the Negro plays on the stage, but "Porgy" will be a Theatre Guild production next season.

The O'Neill character study, "The Emperor Jones," originally offered several years ago and recently revived, remains an outstanding drama of its class. The second work of that type from the same source, "All God's Children Got Wings," also proved strong enough to stand revival this year. Charles Gilpin, a Negro barber, was made immortal among his race and attained permanent fame on the stage in the Haytian melodrama.

Paul Robeson scored an artistic success as the dusky hero, modeled on Jack Johnson's lines, in "Black Boy," in which black and white actors participated. Rose McClendon, an angular actress, won critical commendation in "Deep River," the operatic drama which failed after an ambitious production through the holidays. Julius Bledsoe also scored in this production, in which a cast of contrasting colors partcipated. Robeson and Bledsoe, who possess voices of rare depth and volume, achieved distinction on the concert platform as well.

Miss McClendon went from "Deep River" to "In Abraham's Bosom," repeating her success. This drama brought to general attention an obscure Negro, Frank

Wilson, who substituted for Bledsoe and scored.

In "Earth" Daniel L. Haynes has attracted attention. "The "Bottom of the Cup" proved short-lived.

The outstanding drama of colored character is "Lulu Belle," to be sure, with Lenore Ulric as the Harlem Carmen in a company of 125, of which only the few principals are white. Edward Sheldon, author of that other tragic play, "The Nigger," wrote it in collaboration with Charles MacArthur, a reporter. David Belasco will send the entire production on a national tour next season.

Without exception, whether written by white or black authors, the Negro plays have been dominated by a note of despair. The light-hearted, light-footed Negro of Caucasian imagination plays no part. It is the physical suffering, the mental frustration, the abiding misery of the Negro's lot in city or country that is delineated with a realism that at times is dreadful to observe.

Even in "Lulu Belle," the barbaric gaiety and ruthless rapacity of the heroine serve chiefly to emphasize the hopelessness of her pugilist lover's plight. And it is worth mentioning that Henry Hull's portrayal of that part proved so fine that Negro spectators mistook the white actor for one of their own race.

MATTIE WILKES DEAD

FAMOUS OLD-TIME MUSICAL COMEDY STAR DIES AFTER OPERATION

New York, N. Y., July 8, 1927—Following an operation for appendicitis, Mattie Wilkes, known to old timers as co-star with Ernest Hogan, and to the younger generation for her stellar work in the Belasco production, "Lulu Belle," died Wednesday afternoon at 6 P. M., in the Edgecombe Sanitarium.

Miss Wilkes, who has lived at 115 West 135th street for a number of years is one of the most prominent actresses of the race. Her death comes as a great surprise.

Irvin Miller's 'That's My Baby' Promises To Be Another Hit; Elizabeth Smith Is Big Star

Old Favorites in Bee Freeman, Hampton and Hunter, Louise Williams, Charlie Hawkins, John Alexander, Harriett Calloway and Others, Get Rousing Reception.

REVIEW

New York Sy

MAY 7 1927

Irvin C. Miller's new show, "That's My Baby," under the efficient management of Miss Elizabeth Smith, could be appropriately called the laugh-a-minute show, is proving a real hit at the Elmore Theater this week.

The show, with an all-star cast, will quickly win its place in the hearts of theater goers and a visit to the Elmore this week will convince skeptics that Mr. Miller has uncovered another one of his master pieces.

Elizabeth Smith, the ukelele girl, a tantalizing, vamping package of brown skinned loveliness, with a voice of a mocking bird and eyes that have that come hither expression has the entire town a-humming her hits.

Bee Freeman heads the all-star cast and her appearance on the Elmore stage is the signal for applause as soon as she convinced the audience that she had the goods her well known reputation orders.

To speak of comedy and fun, no show in Pittsburgh has been able to present a cleverer pair of star comedians than Hampton and Hunter and they just carried their audiences away with their naturally droll humor. It's worth while to see this pair of laugh producers in action.

Louise Williams, a soprano with a bell-like voice, received encore after encore and is ably supported by Charlie Hawkins, the juvenile lead.

After seeing John Alexander in a straight role, one is reminded of Homer Tutt, lending himself to the occasion with the ease of a veteran and clever as a dancer, he makes the uninitiated realize naked talent.

The singing and dancing of the chorus was deserving of real praise, executing difficult and eccentric dance steps with consummate ease.

Besides the already mentioned the stars include: Miss Hampton, a singer that thrills her audience with that cooing and plaintive voice. Hardancers.

—By Sparrow.

NEGRO PLAYERS WIN $200 PRIZE IN TOURNAMENT

Five Companies Enter Finals in Little Theatre Competition

EXTRA PRIZE OFFERED

Award of the David Belasco Cup Will be Made After Performance Tonight

Five prize winners in the annual Little Theatre tournament were announced last night at the Frolic Theatre after the presentation of the last three of the seventeen plays presented during the week.

Th awarding of five prizes was a surprise. Only four awards of $200 each, two given by Samuel French for the best unpublished plays entered in the tournament, and two for the best presentation of a play published or unpublished by the management of the tournament, had been provided for. In announcing the awards, however, Barrett H. Clark, chairman of the judges, said it had been decided to award a fifth play a prize. Since there was no prize money available, it was given honorable mention.

The French prizes were awardad "The Immortal Beloved," by Martha Leonard, a dialogue about Beethoven's unknown beloved, presented by the Brookside Open Air Theatre, of Mount Kisco, N. Y., and "The Fool's Errand," written by Eulalie Spence and presented by the Krigwa Players Little Negro Theatre of Harlem. The Negro company was the only one from Manhattan to win a cash prize, although another local company won the honorable mention.

The prizes for presentation went to the Welwyn Garden City Theatre Society, of Garden City, England, for their production of "Mr. Sampson," by Charles Lee, and to the Memphis Little Theatre, Memphis, Tenn., for the presentation of "The Delta Wife," by Walter McClellan. The honorable mention was awarded the Association Players of the Ninety-second Street Young Men's Hebrew Association for their presentation of "Confession," a war play by Kenyon Nicholson.

"The Delta Wife," by the Memphis company, and the comedy by the English company were the bright particular lights of the week of the tournament. In announcing the awards last night, however, Mr. Clark did not rank them in the order of merit in which the judges held them. All five plays will be presented this afternoon and evening, and from them will be chosen one to be given the David Belasco cup. The honorable mention given the Ninety-second Street Y. M. H. A. players was to offer them a chance at the cup.

One of the three plays presented last night was upon a Western theme done with considerable originality. It concerned the Oklahoma oil lands. Another was one of August Strindberg's least pessimistic humors, and the third a play by Paul Green, who recently was awarded the Pulitzer prize for the outstanding play of the year. His offering last night was devitalized by a stilted and lifeless production.

TYLER TELLS ABOUT "INSIDE" OF STAGE

Says Unfairness Of Contracts Is Responsible For Poverty Of Actors

T. O. B. A. OFFERS ONLY TEN WEEKS OF WORK

Contracts Call For 15 Persons And Changes Without Any Notice

BY GEORGE D. TYLER

If it had been my intention to [illegible] before the footlights, I would not be writing these facts that are daily facing the performers, for I know that to get employment, would be next to impossible.

This is especially true of the T. O. B. A. [illegible] which these articles are directed. The circuits are divided into three factions, Western, Southern and Southeastern time, headed by Martin Klein, Milton Starr and S. H. Dudley.

The Dudley End

Shows working the Dudley end receive two weeks of work in Baltimore, four in Washington and four in Virginia, a total of ten weeks with a top salary that seldom exceeds $450. Instead of saying shows I shall here refer to "Our Gang" Revue, said by managers to be different from any touring this time in many seasons. Upon presenting our company to the Dudley office, we received ten contracts, subject to change without notice, cancellation if managers saw fit, and requiring as many as fifteen on a percentage basis.

Here you see why actors are broke and shabbily dressed.

Who We Find On Shows

Many of the girls on the stage are there in hopes of making enough money to school some sister or brother; others are seeking to aid a sick or aged mother, and still others for excitement.

We find both the good and bad element, the bad always trying to teach the other class an easier and more profitable means of livelihood. Thes are the folk who have no ambition or desire to rise above the chorus ranks. Here lies your first handicap as a producer and manager.

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.,

Literary Digest Apr. 16, 1927

THE "DANGEROUS" CHARLESTON—Europe is more insane, if possible, over the Charleston than this country, where it is supposed to have originated. By revelations in the London *Morning Post*, however, we can only claim the honor of having brought it into the open. This informant points to South Africa es a country where the dance has prove "dangerous":

"A correspondent sends me a leading article from the Beira *News*. In this it is recounted how a Rhodesian woman was practising the Charleston with her husband, when a native servant appeared, and seemed greatly astonished.

"'What's the matter?' asked his mistress. 'Do you know this dance? Can you do it?' He answered, 'No, missus; me Bechuana, that Matabele dance.' Another native in Beira asked, 'Why are the white people dancing our dances now?'

"The article, which is fairly outspoken, goes on to point out the lowering effect of the dance on the dignity of the white man, which it is all important to preserve, and urges all white people to refrain from indulging in a dance whose steps 'are the basis of dances which, in their natural home, are far worse than indecent,' and to 'assist those who are seriously trying to uphold the white man's prestige in Africa.'"

DRAMA

A Black Folk Drama

"Earth" Weighs God in the Balance and Finds Him Wanting

Reviewed by HARBOR ALLEN.

As it is produced by New Playwrights 52nd Street Theatre, "Earth," by Em Jo Basshe, has its faults. It is crowded on a shallow stage, much of its fineness is lost by an inexperienced cast in the beat of tom-toms and the rattle of gourds, its speeches grow monotonous for length, its singing stops the story. Yet it remains a great play.

A white man speaks "In Abraham's "Bosom." In Emperor Jones a Negro strips off the white veneer and goes black. The greatness of "Earth" lies in the fact that its Negroes are real, primitive Negroes. Say what you want about slips in dialect, Em Jo Basshe's Negroes think like Negroes and feel like Negroes. His feeling is always right; that's what makes "Earth" great.

Suppose "Earth" hasn't a "plot." Suppose it doesn't move in curtain climaxes to a Sidney Howard end. It is time the drama graduated from the grade-school of plots as the short story has abandoned the schoolboy tricks of O. Henry. When "Earth" is finished it has told its story and exhausted its theme. It has said its say on man and the world. That's enough.

On its surface this play of Negro peasants is pure emotion. Its emotion pours out in a torrent of prayers and invocations, chants and spirituals. At times the play dissolves into rhythm and voodoo dancing. A band of Negroes forms a sort of Greek chorus to the simple action.

Yet under this simple action and under this pure emotion, "Earth" is full of irony. Here is religion, planted in a simple mind, grown to ripe fruit. The fruit it bears is poison. God is a policeman around the corner. God is a school teacher with sour looks and a rod, who grins at you if you know your lessons and swats you if you don't. The Negro mother of the play expects God to treat her as she would treat a friend. When she "gives" God the voodoo witch doctor whom she strangles below the cross, God gives her a stray cow in return. When the cow is drowned in the marsh, God has gone back on his bargain. He has cheated her. In the end the black chorus which has now condemned her, now exalted her, torn by fanaticism, swaying from Jesus to voodoo, tramples her to death.

Senon the witch doctor can trick them, but he can't help them. He is as helpless as God, who, for all their wails and prayers, doesn't show up. They want something to believe in. They starve, their crops are burned, they fight, they kill one another. God doesn't give a damn.

Is this proletarian drama? Is "Earth" food for workers because it deals with simple people, because it isn't cluttered with intellectual patter, because it goes out in the fields and huts and mountain tops, into a community of people, a mass?

Well, what is proletarian drama? Does it include folk drama? Nobody knows. No American has written one. As for Europe: Toller? Andreyev? How much does "Brokenbrow" or "King Hunger" mean to working class audiences? Not much.

I can't say that the New Playwrights Theatre is a working man's theatre. But this I can say: It has produced two honest plays. "Loud Speaker" is an honest satire on American politics and "Earth" is an honest peasant play. "If somebody writes us an honest worker's play," say the directors, "we will produce it. We want one." They are breaking ground. There is much ploughing to be done before a strong tree can grow. When the proletarian artist comes he will find his right furrow. Meanwhile, we ought to help them plough.

WILHELM FURTWAENGLER

Who will be one of the three conductors of tonight's concert at the Metropolitan Opera House in honor of Walter Damrosch.

May Break With Manager

From Paris, so the releases have it, comes word of a break between Miss Florence Mills and her manager, Lew Leslie. It is understood that Miss Mills has been trying for some time to break the managerial bonds due to the unpopularity of her manager, Mr. Leslie, but failed when it developed that the strings were rather strong. Her contract expires in April however, and it is understood that she is not to renew the link.

...WE SIGNED FOR NEW YORK THEATRE GUILD

NEW YORK, June 8.—James B. Lowe, celebrated star of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which was completed in California last week will have its premier in the Central theatre, Broadway and 40th street, in August, was signed last week by Sigurd Russell, publicity agent for Lowe in the east, to appear in "Porgy," at the Theatre Guild in New York next October. Mr. Lowe will come to New York for a week in August to personally appear when "Uncle Tom's Cabin" opens at the Central. Cecil B. DeMille, movie magnate, has bought the picture rights to "Porgy," according to Mr. Russell.

COUNT'S FATHER GLAD HIS SON CHOSE JOSEPHINE AS BRIDE; IS PROUD OF HER

(Picture on Page 2)

Rome, Italy, July 1.—Rumor has become current here that American newspapers are attempting to cast a slur on the royal title of the family of Count di Albertini, who recently announced his marriage to Josephine Baker, American chorus girl of our Race, who is now the pride of Paris. Stories have been told here that a news item appeared in several American papers declaring that the prefect of police in Paris has refused to acknowledge the count as bona fide, claiming his name is not registered as one of "royal blood."

Paris received this announcement with alarm, and immediately assigned the reason to American color prejudice after an investigation had been made.

American newspaper correspondents were a bit amazed when they dug into the records of the di Albertini family here, and were forced to retract their previously published accounts by supplementing them with the fact that the count's father, Pepito di Albertini, is the governor of a town in Friuli province, north of Rome, and was well aware of the fact that his son had wedded Miss Baker. Not only did he know of plans for the marriage, but approved them. The Albertini family comes from Sicily and is of an old line of nobility.

Father Is Pleased

That there will be no parental row over the marriage became apparent when Pepito answered queries propounded to him from many sides from the correspondents who were seeking to stir up color prejudice.

"I'm glad of it," said the governor, "for she is a lovely, clever girl and my son likes the kind of life they will live in the future. I do not believe there is any question of her retiring from the stage. I have not met her, but my son has talked much of her since their first meeting in Paris last year. He gave up a job to win her nine months ago."

"But what about the ostracism your son may undergo because of the difference in race. She is a Negro, you know, governor, and subject to discrimination," a reporter from a New York newspaper asked.

"We don't have any racial feeling over here or in Sicily. Besides, my daughter-in-law is no darker than many southern European women. It would displease me very much if they should select America as their home for I am told that color, not ability and talent, determines the social standing over there. Countess di Albertini will experience no such narrowness here.

"As to the rumor that they could get a divorce later on if my son thought better of it—that is nonsense. They both know we have no divorce and that the marriage tie and family life are sacred."

Although the marriage has been given wide publicity in Italy the only comments have been on the bride's talent, beauty and success in Paris. The only papers commenting on the color question were American papers published in Paris for English readers.

Miss Baker is regarded by white Americans as the first "Colored countess," but this theory fell short of proof when it was cited that several African women, many of whom are relatives of Prince Kojo of Dahomey had married men of royal titles. The incident was not a "social shock" to Paris, as Americans would have the world believe, but was received as a common course of events where color plays no part in the social scale.

BARNEY HICKS OLD TROUPER, WAS LOCAL MAN

Included In "Men of Maryland" by the Rev. Geo. Bragg

Through he courtesy of the Rev. Dr. George F. Bragg, the HERALD is enabled to reproduce the following interesting account of one of Baltimore's earliest actors including Dr. Bragg's [illegible]. Hicks was born in 1842 and died July 21, 1902.

Charles Barney Hicks was a famous vocalist and pioneer minstrel performer. His singing of "Little Maggie May" never failed to bring down the house. He proved such a valuable man that he was associated with a Mr. Knuckle in the management of "The Old Front Street Theatre." As a theatrical manager Mr. Hicks was par excellent. He had that part of the business down to perfection. It was Barney Hicks who originated the first Georgia Minstrels, the first colored troupe that toured the country as such. After touring the United States Mr. Hicks wen to Europe and married a French woman. He never returned to this country.

Having engaged in the entertaining line for so many years, Mr. Hicks acquired, in such, an international reputation—and was at the time of his death—manager of a French circus, then playing at Saraboyo, Java.

In the Christmas edition of the "New York Age," 1909, Mr. Sam Corker, Jr., manager of the "Red Moon" Company, writing of Mr. Hicks, says: "In the old days when managers routed their shows by individual efforts, the manager had to be, by necessity, a tactful man. Possibly the most astute and celebrated Negro theatrical manager was Chas. B. Hicks; his geographical knowledge of the country and his ability to handle actors made him a prominent figure, and his opinions were eagerly sought after.

I understand that he was the first to discover in the making of the itinery of a company, that it was of great profit for his company to make its appearance in the far Northwest in the spring of the year, because at that time the lumbermen had finished their labors in the forests and were flocking in the smaller towns of the territory with their winter's pay, and eager for amusement.

His minute observations prompted him to send his company South during the winter months after the cotton had been picked and the Southerners were possessed of the necessary wherewithal to pay for the happy evenings that a Negro minstrel organiaztion furnished. "So famous had become the theatrical knowledge of Barney Hicks that his opinions were sought by no less distinguished management than the Frohmans. Mr. Hicks rounded out his career as a showman, as manager of a circus that traveled in Australia and India, where he died.

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes etc.

DRAMA

"BLACK VELVET," by Willard Robertson. Presented by M. A. Nicholas. Directed by Mr. Robertson, At the Liberty.

THE CAST.

Gen. John William Darr.....Arthur Byron
Simpson .....Jimmie Rosen
Patricia Harper.....Leona Hogarth
Cleo .....Nadea Hall
Alice Darr.....Kate Byron
John William Darr 3d....Nelan Jaap
The Peddler.....Louis La Bey
Mr. Harper.....Frank Sylvester
Joe Lancaster.....Peter Bentley
Calhoun Darr.....Joseph Greene
Yeller Richmond.....Leonard Doyle
Charles Ware.....Parker Fennelly
Smith N.....Charles Slattery

One critic called it "a bad dream"; another said "neither Southeners nor Northerners nor Negroes will derive much satisfaction from the lurid and loosely-written sentimental and melodramatic tract"; but I say if you are hard-boiled to the word "nigger," if you are liberal racially, and you know or think you know a little of the white man's racial inconsistencies, see "Black Velvet."

This three-act drama covers only twenty-four hours of life on the Darr plantation in the "yellow pine belt" of the South. It shows that General Darr, of the old school, does not believe in any dreams of racial equality. To him "the white man is master." And yet, though he shielded for sixty or more years the tragic death of his pretty young bride, who was killed at the close of the Civil War by a mulatto man, he remained loyal to the Rev. Calhoun Darr, a Negro preacher and companion. In fact, he spoke of and thought of "Calhoun," this full-blooded Negro, as a member of the Darr family. But when John William Darr 3d, his grandson, who became engaged to a northern girl, carried on a clandestine affair with a mulatto girl, he declared the Darr family disgraced. He was determined to kill his grandson. Death, due to heart failure, at the close of the drama, prevented the old man from committing the homicide. And all of this is the Southerner's part in the play.

10-5-27

The North—with its love of industry and capital—is represented by a Mr. Harper and his daughter, Patricia (who becomes engaged to Darr 3d), and Mr. Smith, the labor agent. Dramatic is the scene where Smith tells old man Darr the part the Negro plays in the life of both the North and the South.

The Harpers wanted a sawmill started on the Darr plantation. Smith wanted the Negroes to come North with him to work for $10 a day. But Smith was shot off stage by Joe Lancaster. Another tragic death occurs off stage—a mulatto man is lynched! He struck a white man in the stomach—and that man was Darr's grandson! Lynching has always been a blot on the pages of American history. If you object to that blot, then you'll object to "Black Velvet."

Had the producer seen fit to see four "real" Negroes in the play, instead of "painted" Negroes, the box office sales might be a little heavier. Somehow we like to see our people act.

"Black Velvet," though well acted, will not have as long a run as the ancient "Abie's Irish Rose." The New York theatre-going public is queer—it likes a taste of the real, but it cannot be made to accept some of the cross sections of life.—T. E. B.

By and by either the chair, disease, accident or old age will get you. And good and bad suffer the same fate.

"Porgy" Analyzed By Vreeland In Telegram

"Porgy," the play concerning the Negro which is being given at the Guild Theatre by a company of Negro players is attracting serious attention from the cognoscenti of the drama. Especially interesting is the reaction of the reviewers of theatrical events, and reference has been made in these columns to the views of Alexander Woolcott of the New York World and Percy Hammond of the New York Herald Tribune.

And now comes Frank Vreeland of the New York Telegram, who makes what might be termed a psycho-analysis of the play, declaring that in transcribing their book into a play DuBose and Dorothy Heyward have tried to "solidify almost intangible things into concrete, dramatic form—hardening the story thereby." Under the caption, "'Porgy' Leaves a Touch of Dark Brown Taste. Negro Play Not So Stimulating as Expected," Vreeland writes as follows:

10-22-27

The advent of "Porgy" on the Theatre Guild stage the past week lends point to the fact that it is now the mode to make the Negro seriously. With the war, whenever an author thought of a colored character he presented him as a jolly pickaninny, and vaudeville hasn't yet worked out of that carefree jocular stage. Then somebody—maybe it was Gilbert Seldes—discovered that the Negro has a soul and more wistfulness than you could crowd into one book.

Hence it has become the fashion to make a great, solemn sanctification of the Negro and to find that his race has a message. Not alone is he given a "theme" and a "motif" on the stage—the vogue of spirituals did that for him, almost raising him to operatic heights. But to show that the ebony player had arrived as an "artistic force," the smarter, spohisticated people began inviting the more eminent dusky thespians to their homes, only to make pert, little sallies about them behind their backs. I regret to say.

An earnest attempt to do justice to the Negro was made by Du Bose Hayward in his original novel of "Porgy" in which he described the innermost emotions of the black folk almost with the sympathetic accuracy of one of their own color who had an X-ray admission to their deepest secrets. It was a very compassionate and comprehending work, illustrating the depths of a long suffering race through a long suffering cripple who was the football of fate.

The burden of the book rang again and again:—"It's mighty hard to be a nigger." There was little hint that these brown skinned people had ever given an excuse for minstrel frivolities. Teeth that were bared in broad grins of merriment in other books were here bared, primarily, in a snarl of resentment. Fate assumed a drab chocolate hue.

In the play much of this has been lost in the effort to solidify almost intangible things into concrete, dramatic form; hardening the story thereby. The book is largely subjective, the play objective; the one atmosphere as twilight glimmerings the other as definite as auto headlights. That is exactly the gap which yawns between the same story's success as a novel and its comparative barrenness as a play, wherein the lot of a Negro doesn't seem nearly so hard as that of a Russian peasant, Maxim Gorky model.

A Black Ace Gets A Raw Deal

The suffering of the race no longer is graphically individualized in the person of the beggar Porgy, who now seems no more important in the general jam than a brown caterpillar. Neither in his stage portrait nor in his acting does Porgy receive a fitting transcription from the novel, for there is no hint of the far dim destinies which seemed to becken him on to page 196 of the slim book. In the original the mendicant takes the final blow, that of his Bess' disappearance, with apathetic resignation, which was natural in a character who brooded for a living. In the play at the end he sets out from Charleston to seek her in New York in his spavined goat chariot. It is a more dramatic turn, but somehow it seems too childish a step for even an ingenuous Negro who's lost his mammy.

Heyward and his wife have probably dramatized the work as well as could possibly be done under the circumstances, and when the shutters clash open and Porgy suddenly stabs his creeping rival in the dorsal vertebrae, it causes more of a dramatic slither down your back than in the book. Yet in the end you don't much care what happens to Porgy, because his identity has been shuffled into the pack. With the exception of Hauptmann's "The Weavers," and possibly the Capek's "R. U. R.," mass plays, in contrast to individual studies, have never been able to agitate the brain cells of the spectator. It leaves a rather flat, dark brown taste.

PARIS.—The Josephine Baker craze has about ended.

As the best indication of this, her contract with the Follies Bergere which expired Sept. 15th has not been renewed.

Toward the end she only had one bit in this in which she imitated Baltimore's Johnny Hudkins, as a black face comedian.

Her contract also to manage her Montmarte cabaret which expires October first has not been renewed. Effort was made to have Johnny Hudgins take it over.

The frisco with the so called Italian count and her marriage to him is said to have caused Josephine Baker to lose caste.

As a brownskinned girl pretty, well formed, simple she sat on top of Paris. As the owner of two Rolls Royce autos, the wife of an Italian white man, and face powdered so that she appeared white, Paris turned a cold shoulder and looked elsewhere for entertainment.

Others Attracted

Jo Baker's sensational rise and fall in Paris has attracted many American brown skinned girls to emulate her example. Dozens have failed. Some dance half naked in suburban wine houses preferring the squalor there plus the hope of getting their chance in the big cabaret to returning home and admitting failure.

Josephine is 21. In 1925 before coming abroad she was end girl in Sissle and Blake's "Shuffle Along"—Some weeks in Paris she earned as much as $3000. How much of this she put in her first national bank and how much in Rolls Royces and fun, time will tell.

Negroes In Shows On Broadway

(Continued from page 1)

entertainment world is attributed somewhat to the sensational success of a Harlem Negress in Paris, who was erroneously reported as having been married to an Italian count. She started a vogue of Negro performers, both in Paris and London. This stimulated musical productions.

The present wave of color in the imitators on this side and brought a deluge of dark show folk to the doors of booking offices seeking night club, vaudeville and theatrical engagements. Their numbers were increased by recruits from all sections of America. The deepening color hue appears not only on the stage but in night clubs, cabarets, and other places of entertainment.

10-20-27

Several luxuriously appointed hotels have been fitted up in Harlem for the patronage of the new elite of the Negro stage aristocracy. Negro newspapers are featuring the attainments of their race in dramatic art and a new and dazzling form of night life is developing around the darktown theatrical centers of Harlem.

Harlem theaters are nearly all "dark but not in the usually accepted sense of the term. Several of these theaters are supposed not to admit whites, but a few privileged caucasians always may be seen at their performances.

Mark Eismann, booking agent and theatrical producer who has specialized in placing Negro attractions, said this would be by far the biggest year of his business.

"Every time some Negro show scores a big success, you find more and more of them crowding in," said Mr. Eismann. "It was that way after 'Emperor Jones' got over, and after that Negro play, 'In Abraham's Bosom' got the Pulitzer prize. While the latter play was a hop commercially, the award of the prize was a big sensation in the Negro world. For weeks afterward we had visits from Negroes who wanted to write or produce plays, or who wanted to get on the stage. There never has been a time in my experience when Negroes were as busy or as successful as they are now. They have an idea that at last they are doing their stuff and they certainly are working hard."—Harvey Anderson, Special Correspondent of the Morning News.

Negroes In Shows On Broadway

They Are Featured in 23 Theatres

WRITING PLAYS ALSO

Parts Range From Emotional Drama to Burlesque

New York, Oct. 15—The American drama if Broadway is to be taken as a criterion, will appear this year against a dark background. The season just opening puts on view two or three times more Negroes than have ever before appeared in any single theatrical season.

Scouting plays during the last week, this writer found twenty-three theaters exclusive of Harlem, where Negro actors and vaudeville performers are included in the casts. Every branch of theatrical entertainment is represented by Negroes, including straight drama, dancing, singing, burlesque, jubilee, choruses, comedy, tragedy, clowning, legerdemain and musical specialities. One show, a big Broadway success, has forty Negroes; another has sixty and another eighty.

One of last year's biggest dramatic hits is now on the road with three Negroes in the cast. The straight drama in which Negroes participate includes one ambitious Broadway play, another now on the road, and four or five plays in the little theaters of Greenwich Village.

Four new schools of dramatic art have been established in Harlem, Negro capital of the world during the summer. Booking agents of all kinds are besieged with Negroes seeking engagements. Shakespeare and Isben are now in rehearsal, with all black casts, under the direction of a Harlem producing company, organized by Negroes.

This company, it is understood, will be maintained as a stock company at Harlem.

At one of the largest moving picture houses in New York, advertised as "the most famous moving picture theater in the world," a Negro conductor leads a white orchestra. Many picture houses which give vaudeville program have Negro performers.

Unitil Eugene O'Neil's "Emperor Jones" came out of Greenwich Village about five years ago, Negroes in the theater worked for the most part of their old established trade of singing and "hoofing." The success of "Emperor Jones" stimulated Negro playwriters and actors, and since then more and more Negroes have been finding a place both on the legitimate stage and in big

(Continued on page 4)

Josephine Baker Runs Novel Cabaret in Paris

Paris, France.—Josephine Baker, American dancer and cabaret owner, whose eminence in France is second only to the president of the republic and Marshal Foch, the world war hero, runs her Montmartre cabaret on a novel basis. There are no entertainers, the visitors furnish the show themselves. The hostess spies an old man attempting to execute the latest dance step. Immediately he is hauled out on the floor by Miss Baker and the show is on. The result of a public dancing lesson is hysterical. This adds to the popular entertainer's bank roll, because she saves what a troupe of entertainers would cost her.

Ethel Waters Opens Up New Broadway Night Club

NEW YORK, Oct. 20.—The latest thing in the theatrical world is the opening this Wednesday night of the Ethel Waters Club "300" at Broadway and 54th street, featuring an all-white revue of which Ethel Waters will be the star and Earl Dancer the manager. Miss Waters, whose show "Africana" at the Shubert National closed several weeks ago, went into vaudeville for a few weeks until she secured backing for this, her latest venture.

In High Harlem

THE KRIGWA PLAYERS' LITTLE NEGRO THEATRE

By W. E. B. DuBois

I HAVE finished a little job which I set myself in 1925. It was the job of starting a Little Theatre movement in high Harlem. The movement has been auspiciously begun. I leave it with fondest benedictions to those beter able than I to conduct its growth.

I believe that ontside one's bread - and - butter work, one owes a special and local duty to one's neighborhood. In my six years' residence in high Harlem, I have often wondered just what I could do for the Negro world between 125th and 145th streets which others could not do better.

Finally, I tried a Little Theatre. We had often discussed it. We had held a meeting or two, but nothing came of it. I am no theatrical man, though I love the theatre. But I got Burroughs. Charles Burroughs is a great dramatic student and leader. Four times, under greatest difficulties, he had staged my pageant, "The Star of Ethiopia," using from 300 to 1,200 actors. Burroughs promised and gave unstinted aid. The movement began August 14, 1925, in the Renaissance Casino. Thence it was moved to the basement of the 135th street branch of the Public Library. The library officials had long urged such a movement. They gave us use of the basement and put in a stage. Louise Latimer planned curtain and scenery and Aaron Douglas decorated the walls. Thus was born the Krigwa Players' Little Negro Theatre.

We worked two years. What did we do? We gathered a group of some 50 persons who expressed interest, of whom 25 or more actually helped as actors, boosters, ticket sellers and what not. We produced the following plays:

"The Broken Banjo," by Richardson—Renaissance Casino, August 14, 1925.

"Compromise," by Richardson; "The Church Fight," by Gaines-Shelton; "The Broken Banjo," by Richardson—Library, May 3, 10 and 17, 1926.

"Mandy," by Jefferson; "Foreign Mail," by Spence—International House, October 25, 1926.

"Pandora's Box," by Amend; "Mandy," by Jefferson; "Foreign Mail," by Spence; "Her," by Spence—Library, January 17, 19 and 24, 1927.

"Compromise," by Richardson; "Broken Banjo," by Richardson; "Blueblood," by Johnson; "Her," by Spence; "Fool's Errand," by Spence—Library, April 20, 25 and 27, 1927.

"Fool's Errand," by Spence—Little Theatre Tournament, Frolic Theatre, May 2, 7, 1927.

As a grand finale we entered the Little Theatre Tournament for the Belasco Cup. It is held annually in New York and participated in by Little Theatre groups from all over the United States and even, last year, from England.

To our gratification, we were among the four prize winners, entitling us to play at the final gala night and giving us $200 cash. With these laurels won by Burroughs and the faithful players, I am resting from my labors and giving the task to other eager hands.

Our financial success has been small, but we have paid our debts. None of the players or workers has received any compensation.

Income.

First Season	$245.21
Second SEeason:	
First Program	205.45
Second Program and Frolic Theatre tickets	256.38
Prize check	200.00
	$907.04

Expense.

First Season	$165.64
Second Season:	
First Program	210.09
Second Program and Tournament	366.31
Tournament fee	165.00
	$907.04

Our difficulties have been the following:

1. Getting over our ideas to the actors and to the public.
2. Opposing the "anteroom to Broadway" idea.
3. Discipline.
4. Voluntary help.

Our idea of a Little Theatre was based on plays by Negroes, about Negroes, for Negro audiences in Negro districts. Now this was strong medicine for young folk trained to think that no Negroes could write good plays; that they should get away from the merely racial to the universal, and that they should show white folks what they could do. Many of our young people are still arguing this matter and are not yet convinced that Negroes are already writing excellent plays; that our life is full of drama of the highest interest, and that, while white visitors are always welcome, the Negro audience must be the norm and object of a Negro theatre. It is gaing to take some little time for these ideas to take deep root.

The public was not properly apprised of the object of our effort and our publicity was very poor. I knew what was needed, but had neither time nor money: we needed a large number of volunteer workers to talk and tell the world; we needed advertisement and posters. I was disappointed at the small number of volunteer workers who offered, and many who came to work were disappointed because there was no specific work laid out for them.

A third difficulty was the number of young people who came to us with the idea that we were training actors for Broadway. They were looking to a career and earning a living on the stage and wanted to begin with us. This idea was encouraged when two or three stepped from our stage to work downtown. This was legitimate and laudable, but it was not our main object. Acting is a fine career and we must all earn a living, but the object of a Little Theatre is art—not money—it is to do a beautiful, complete thing for the sake of the thing itself, and not for its utility. It was difficult for many of the young folk to see this. They were a bit impatient at art for art's sake.

Very critical was the matter of the inner discipline of the group. Plays must be chosen; parts assigned; dates set for rehearsals and renditions. This involved authority, discipline. Our group was ostensibly democratic, and yet we all knew that many matters could not be left to chance majority vote. With a polite respect for age and reputation, the group was willing to put a good deal of power in my hands and those of Mr. Burroughs; but we continually tried to refer matters to them. For the most part, the spirit and team-work were excellent, but there was some open contempt for authority, bickering, jealousy and backbiting. Indeed, our tournament play was nearly ruined by this spit, but the prevailing loyalty came to the rescue manfully and made the malcontents play the game. They capitulated with good grace and, although the bickering made our play less smooth and finished than it should have been, it proved a work of art, as well as proof of self-government.

Our greatest and final difficulty was lack of a large enough number of voluntary workers, able and willing to give the requisite amount of time. A dozen of us did all the work and four or five bore the brunt. I was disappointed at this. I thought that twenty or thirty interested folk could give three and five hours a week to the cause. This proved not true. Perhaps we need to wait a few years for more intelligent voluntary folk who can afford the leisure.

The future is bright for the Little Theatre idea in Harlem. But the seed that has been sown needs a period of incubation. We must make up our minds to certain things. Among them are: Is Negro life dramatic and interesting? Do we want profit or art? Will we subordinate ourselves to authority? When these things are settled we can build a real Little Theatre movement.

I feel that, personally, I have done all I can at present. I have presented an idea to the black public, not perfectly, not adequately, but with fair clearness and some success. I have asked and received an amount of unselfish co-operation which was remarkable. I cannot ask Charles Burroughs to do more without adequate compensation. He has given time, money, heart and strength. He has poured out his knowledge, keen critical ability and magnificent artistic sense, even when it was received without appreciation. Well—that's life. It was a beautiful venture. We loved it even when we despaired of it.

I let it go now with regretful thanks to all who helped. I withdraw the name "Krigwa," which is my own copyrighted property, but I hand on the idea, the experience, the hope to others stronger, abler and more willing.

W. E. B. DU BOIS.

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.,

Says Negro Public Claims It Wants Better Shows, But Isn't Ready To Pay For 'Em

Declares, However, That With All Its Handicaps and Its Ups and Downs, the Future Negro Theatre is Bright and Hopeful.

Courier 2-12-27 Pittsburgh Pa.

By FLOYD J. CALVIN

NEW YORK, Feb. 10.—What kind of a man is Irvin C. Miller? Well, for one thing, I know he is a hard man to interview. I trailed him two weeks before I could make him sit still long enough to talk things over. He made an appointment with me for 6 o'clock. At 20 seconds to six I walked into the new "Foot-Lights" Club, Inc., of which he is president, at 115 West 131st street. He was picking up his hat. "Gee, you're prompt," he said, taking out his watch. "I was just getting ready to go. My chauffeur will be here in a minute and we'll go to dinner."

The chauffeur was delayed and I was glad. I immediately took out my scribbling utensils, assumed an air of importance, and began writing away.

Mr. Miller is still a comedian at heart. "What songs have you written?" I queried. "Well," he answered, "I have written 'Suwanee River,' 'Old Black Joe,' and 'Kentucky Home,' the only trouble is somebody else wrote them before I did." "Did you ever play comedian in any of your shows?" I asked further. "Why, yes," he replied. "And I went over big. The public raved over me and is crying for me to come back. Everywhere I go the people are glad to see me. Even when I go down home my folks are glad to see me, my friends are glad to see me, the *sheriff* is glad to see me—in fact, everybody is glad to see me." And then he laughed heartily at his old jokes used back when he himself, was on the stage.

Mr. Miller at present has three shows on the road doing a gross average of $6,000 a week (Brownskin Models, Red Hot Mama and Desires of 1927) and is opening a fourth on January 31 in Washington called "Gay Harlem," which is now in rehearsal. He employs over 160 performers and has a payroll of about $6,000 a week. His shows average 42 weeks a season. He owns and controls both Broadway Rastus, Inc., and the Irvin C. Miller Productions, Inc. Mr. Miller works on an average of 17 and 18 hours a day. He eats four and five meals a day, but weighs only 176 pounds and looks slim, since he is about six feet, one inch. He is 40 years old and has had more than one show on the road each season since 1921.

Irvin Colloden Miller was born in Columbia, Tenn. He graduated from Fisk University at Nashville in 1904, played left halfback on the Fisk football team, played baseball, basketball, was boxer and runner. Mr. Miller said with a smile: "The only two things I still use from my athletic training is my running and boxing. When I do big talk, if my boxing can't back me up, my running can."

Finally Mr. Miller had had all the fun he wanted, and we got down to business. "The greatest thing in my life is *Time*," he said decisively. "I am a student of time, and I can talk on that subject for hours. I do everything by a certain tempo. If I am back stage, without even seeing my audience or seeing a performer, I can tell if the show is fast enough to suit the audience, or too slow. If I am on the stage I can tell if a joke is too long before it gets to the point. I can tell if an audience is getting tired, and what tires it. I just feel those things instinctively, but that comes from studying them so long it has become a part of me. I run my business the same way—by a certain tempo."

Mr. Miller would punctuate his serious flashes by a joke or two, then he would get down to business again. "In business there is no Santa Claus," and he pounded on the table before him. "Colored men, especially, have got to learn this. Business is like the old Bible saying: 'You reap what you sow.' You won't get out of anything any more than what you put into it. Negroes have got to quit looking for somebody to give them something. They have got to learn to do business like anybody else, and rise or fall on their merits. There used to be a time when the white man coddled the Negro, because in a way he felt responsible for his condition, but that is not so any more. The only way any of us will get anything now is to go out and get it. Otherwise we won't get anything. Some day colored men will own theaters down town, but they will own them to make money just like other people own them, and not for foolish notion of race pride. It is hard for colored men to get capital, but the only way they will get capital, is to get out and get it. The white man won't give it to them. Some few colored men, who have been in the business a long time are known for their integrity and business ability, may be able to command capital, but they well command it because the people who have money will believe they can make more money, and not because they are colored. In other words, the Negro has got to quit living in the past and learn the modern way of doing things, and do them that way, or he will be left behind, abused and exploited."

"What about the Negro public?" I asked. "The Negro public pretends it wants better shows," he said, "but it isn't willing to pay for them. Negroes will go into white theaters where they can only sit in the balcony and pay double the price they are charged in a colored theater for orchestra seats. And some of the shows they see are no better than those offered in their own theaters. What the Negro public must learn is it is up to change conditions if it is not satisfied with the present. If they don't appreciate anything better by patronizing it, they won't get anything better."

The highest price Mr. Miller ever paid a performer was $3,000 a week. This sum went to Jack Johnson. The highest he ever paid a woman performer was $750 a week. "What of the colored performer?" I asked. "The colored performers are loyal," he said. "Most of them, be it said to their credit, would rather work for a colored man than a white man. The men are further advanced than the women, but this is because women have been discouraged from the stage. Still, women can make more money in an honest way in this field than in any other. The grade of the performer is improving. Many college people are coming in, simply because the stage is becoming better understood. The average person, when thinking of going on the stage, used to fear it because they didn't understand it. Now they know it is all right if they make it all right, and better talent is coming in."

"What of the press' attitude?" I asked, with fear and trembling. Mr. Miller looked at me with a smile. "Well," he began, "since you asked me I'm going to tell you. The press is inadequate in its theatrical department. It doesn't have competent men in charge of the work. First of all, the reporters who come to see the shows are more interested in the chorus girls than in the shows. I have had them to come to review my shows and never ask to see me or the company manager. They don't know what kind of handicaps we are under, and don't care. The owners of the newspapers are fair in their attitude, and want to help, but it's the men assigned to the jobs who fall down. I want to give *The Pittsburgh Courier* credit, however, for making an intelligent effort to get the stage and performers understood. The Courier's feature articles are educating the public to an understand- of our problems, and that means we won't be so badly misjudged in the future. Our stage needs criticism all right, but it needs constructive criticism. I remember when my 'Put and Take' first opened on Broadway. All the white papers gave us fine reviews. But one colored man on an important white paper, knew the truth about what a shoestring basis we were working on and came out and told about itin his paper, and that one review did us more harm than would be imagined. Now there were 70 colored people there trying hard to do something worth while, and a favorable word from him would have made it unanimous and our prospects would have been much improved. But his article actually made our road harder to travel. The Negro show business isn't strong enough for real criticism yet. We have first got to get a show business."

Two of Mr. Miller's productions are revues and one a musical comedy. A revue is a series of beautiful scenes, without any necessary connection. A musical comedy must have a book, and have a thread of a story. "Red Hot Mama," is the musical comedy. The revue is more in favor because it can be cut or lengthened, according to the theatre management's desire or policy. It costs about $6,000 to produce a show of the Miller type. The largest he has produced cost $10,000, Brownskin Models. All this money must be gotten back in one season, with profit, he explained, as a new season must see new scenery, property and everything. Women performers average $30 a week, while men average $40; men taking principals average $75; women principals average $60.

"What of the future of the business?" I asked. "The future is bright and hopeful," he answered. "My generation of producers inherited absolutely nothing in a business way from the old. All we got was a good name in acting, while the white man handled the money. Our present day producers have had to learn everything on the business side. But we are making the way easier for the next generation. Before my day it was unheard of for a colored man to get pay for stage material, but now I buy it from our own writers, and others buy it. We are also training company managers, stage managers, artists, etc. Steve Miller, my chief mechanical engineer, is a Tuskegee graduate. We are training men in all departments and the next generation should do much more than we have been able to do."

Just then the big grey $4,400 Cadillac sedan came up and we were whisked away to one of the best dinners I ever ate, at Craigg's.

JOSEPHINE BRIDE OF "COUNT" ONLY IN FILM, SHE SAYS

Courier 2-26-27 Pittsburgh Pa.

PARIS, June 23.—(AP)—Josephine Baker's "count" holds noble rank only in a film in which he will appear in the near future, she today told the Paris newspaper L'Oeuvre.

"Stories sure do travel fast," the colored girl, former Harlem Charleston stepper and now a dancer in a Montmarte cabaret, is quoted as saying. "It was something I told my friends for a joke—and see how everybody has taken it seriously."

"They's already talking about my divorce," she went on. "But how can I be divorced, since I am only married on the screen? Perhaps that's the best way of being married."

She grinned as she told of telegrams from all corners of the world congratulating her on her suddenly-acquired title.

AN IRISH "EMPEROR JONES"

DUBLIN, Jan. 20.

WHEN the Dublin Drama League, of Which W. B. Yeats is the President, announced last season that Eugene O'Neill's "The Emperor Jones" would be included in its productions, there was division of opinion as to the wisdom of the proposal. The majority of those interested favored the idea, but the minority, and it must be confessed it was a very small minority, opined that no white man, however clever, could play the title part; that only a negro actor could get the realism of the author's conception. At that time, however, nothing came of the Drama League's intention; it was explained that the author had expressed his unwillingness to permit the production. Be that as it may, Mr. O'Neill's objections must have been overcome and the play was announced early in the present season. It was taken for granted that Rutherford Mayne, founder of the Ulster Literary Theatre, author of "The Drone" and other plays and guiding spirit of the Ulster Players, would, as originally planned, assume the part of the Pullman porter royalty.

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Mr. Mayne is a man of big stature and he possesses an unusually fine voice. Moreover, he is an actor of ability and, at least in Ireland, there is no other member of the professional or quasi-professional stage so well suited to play Mr. O'Neill's ill-fated hero. But there remained the theory that it was no part for a white man and speculation turned on the probability of a "magpie" interpretation. As things turned out, that description is, in a sense, quite appropriate.

Mayne had to assume the double task of grasping the psychology of the ordinary, normal negro mind and then of building up the character of Brutus Jones. It was quite clear that he did make an effort in this direction, but it was equally clear that his knowledge of the colored man was very superficial. All through his performance Mayne was the white man beneath the dark make-up. In the opening scene he was at his best. That is to say, he came nearest in that scene to the real negro, although he frequently slipped away from the "negro speech" and spoke the colloquialisms with slightly altered emphasis. He rang true throughout the entire scene and his acceptance of the wholesale desertions and their portent, followed by his dignified departure, left nothing to be desired. Soon after his entrance into the forest, however, the white actor and the author's realism came into conflict and from that moment forward he ceased to be a negro and became the white man playing the part of a negro in the white man's way.

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Mr. Mayne became more and more restrained in each successive scene. As the peril increased, the more subdued he became. He scarcely moved at all, but ever alert, ever listening, he seemed to weigh his every thought. Gradually he yielded to physical weariness until, at last, lying on the ground exhausted, he prayed softly to his Creator for aid. His Brutus Jones was a thinker who collected all his wits and held them together for the purpose of baffling his hunters. In his handling of the scenes with the apparitions his acting was that of a white man who was delirious and whose mind somehow vaguely grasped the fact. There was no abandon in his voice, no panic of movement, no suggestion of madness. He was in the throes of delirium and his defeat proceeded from external rather than from internal causes. He was never terrible to behold nor did he succeed in making his audience become part of the play as, St. John Ervine objected, Paul Robeson did. In brief, Rutherford Mayne was not the character drawn by the author, thereby lending color to, if not proving, the theory as to the part being one that no white man could play.

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Inasmuch as Mr. Mayne made the play intelligible to his audience, the interpretation must be regarded as successful, and the Dublin Drama League has done the author and the world theatre a great service in undertaking the production. Mr. Mayne is entitled to something more than mere congratulations. It took courage rather than ambition to consent to assume the part at all, and, under the circumstances, his study of the rôle was more than remarkable. In view of the fact that he is the first white actor to play Brutus Jones, he may be said to have made theatrical history. Mr. O'Neill's play is well known throughout Europe and, now that it has been produced with a white man in the chief rôle, it is probable that other centres will follow Dublin's example and stage the play. For Susan Glaspell's one-act play, "Trifles," which preceded the O'Neill play, the Drama League obtained a cast composed exclusively of Abbey players. This subtle little masterpiece owed its effectiveness chiefly to Eileen Crowe, who, as Mrs. Hale, got her every point across. Her associates gave the impression that they were conscious of the difficulties to be encountered and, in their anxiety, they frequently fumbled lines and situations pregnant with meaning. The fact that scores of people were unable to obtain admission to the Drama League performances and the heavy advance booking for the seven performances to be given next week are evidence of the interest taken in the works of Eugene O'Neill, of which "Emperor Jones" was the first to be presented in the Irish capital.

J. J. HAYES.

NEGRO ACTORS APPRAISED BY STARK YOUNG

Writer Analyzes Professional Achievements of Present Day Tsepians

(From New Republic)

Whenever Negro material appears in our theatre, as it has done from time to time these last few seasons we get a reaction that is an interesting comment on the realism in vogue nowadays among us. It may be either Negro acting of plays dealing with Negro life or both; in every case there is a special sort of enthusiasm or reaction drawn from critics and audiences.

When the players are Negroes, we are sure to hear from one quarter or another that there is remarkable acting to be seen in town. People who like to champion causes rush themselves on to a somewhat greater enthusiasm than they might express in the case of ordinary white actors. People who are tired of the flatness of most of our acting and would relish something more of warmth and glow and exoticism, rush their hearts to these Negro actors' feet. People who shine by discovering an instance of newness which is great art at last, the proclamation of which will also add to the proclaimere's reputation for courage and prophetic insight, hasten to trumpet the new greatness or the new real-artness.

No Better Than Others

It is much better to enjoy these Negro players, if you like, but to keep it clear in your head that in most cases what they exhibit is not acting at all, to speak of. It is no better than the usual playing that we see on Broadway, and in many instances not so good, because of its lack of a technical and professional training that might project it into a minor craft at least. This is true, though it does not prevent the Negro players from being, if you like, more interesting, or less uninteresting than the usual run on Broadway. The problem at issue rests on the distinction between substances and idea between medium and form, between the material of acting tnd the acting art by which something is said.

It is nonsense to say that these Negro players are great actors. Such talk does little good either to the art they attempt or to the players themselves. Mr. Gilpin, of "The Emperor Jones," beginning rather poorly, developed in time a certain amount of acting skill. Mr. Paul Robeson, of the same play, of "All God's Chillun Got Wings," and other ventures, is scarcely an actor at all. He suggests a fine understanding man brought to the service of an idea which he realizes deeply and nobly and which he renders on the stage as best he can; but this does not make him an actor. These two players and others from time to time have had splendid moments, instances where a moderate amount of craft, a great wave of emotion and a telling natural endowment and quality carried them to remarkable heights; but this does not make them great actors. The stress in the case of these Negro players falls elsewhere. It is as acting material that they are notable.

Superb Acting Mediums

Negroes are by nature a superb acting medium. They have voices that are engaging by their strangeness to our ears and that are theatrical because they are moving and warm and flexible. They have flexible bodies and perfect relaxation; they have a quick emotional response and a gift of rapport and mutual interest among themselves that is unfailing. They have, too, very often, a kind of simple humanity and sweetness that is touching and persuasive, a freshness and spontaneity that is disarming, and a suggestion of power and force, brutality and abandon that heightens the impression of that vitality by which the stage comes alive. All this, however, should not be confused with acting, which consists of the medium plus the projection into a form that expresses the idea; all this has the same relation to acting that a beautiful voice has to singing. To distinguish between the material and the form in an art is the beginning of any knowledge of it.

Theatrical — 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.,

SYLVESTER RUSSELL'S REVIEW

American and European Gospel Songs and How They Vary in Racial and Religious Significance. What Should be Done? Cooper's White and Black Review with Butterbeans & Susie Storm Chicago. "Kentucky Sue" At the Grand. "Bon Ton Minstrels" At the Apollo. Virginia Liston Shot. Snow Fisher Dying.

Dwight W. Moody and Ira D. Sankey gave to the world the Moody and Sankey songs. They were both understood to be British subjects, who made fame and fortune in America as fast as they presented at least six editions of numbered books of their gospel songs. Mr. Moody was a wonderful divine, whom I heard preach in his palmy days, a real Christian whose lyrics will live, a perfect fit to Sankey the composer. No American, colored or white, has ever approached the repertoire production of Moody and Sankey, a tribute to their record as producers of gospel songs. It is regretful that their songs do not live more apparently in American religious meetings, because of their appeal to humanity and the soul, for it is in that capacity that they over-ride the modern gospel song producers of the white race in America, and even tie with the old jubilee themes of Slavonic tradition which white composers have extracted and set to music during the period from 1875 till 1890, at least, when American churches were singing Moody and Sankey songs and hearing jubilee songs sang by colored singers. This subject as described, remember, having no relation to secular songs, only tends to show how the songs of our country vary in racial and religious significance. The "sons of slavery" is a scattering race which I have originally maintained as a common philosopher writer, not a scattered race but a scattering race, made permanent by slavery; I make this plain in this particular subject because some people of African descent do not like to entertain the flattering truth of slave blood or dialect which some of them may not know is indicative of the superior talented qualities of the African blood descent which made white people steal and copy their music as they are doing today, which proves to be a tribute to the duskies. This subject also goes to show how far the white and colored sacred song composers are away from the sticking-to-one-thing point of successful worthy function. Take, for instance, James Weldon Johnson, a brainy writer, whose brother, Rosamond Johnson, is a tuneful composer. They have recently produced the new form of "Spirituals," derivatives from the jubilee formula of original church meeting songs planted in slavery. But the Johnson brothers are not evangelists and have other occupations which detract from what their total efforts as sacred song collaborators might have been. So there we have a racial comparison of Moody and Sankey and the two men of a scattering race by example who could have given to the world perhaps its greatest permanent sacred song service. This subject again is only a lesson to the coming generation of religious composers, with the hope that the melodies of African blood may be enshrined in the next universal books of superior gospel songs. There are two fields—the Spirituals in sheet music and the gospel songs in books. Such compositions in the future should be strictly American, neither eccentric nor applying to one race only, nor unique in queer significance of heathenism or humor, but everybody's music from the God-given race of talent. The theme of future words and musical compositions can only depend upon their merit by test and criticism before putting each number in a collection for publication. It may not be possible for only two men to compile such work. It would be best for a heavy financial publishing house to be established to that end, for the American people today are living too far from the teachings of Christ, living in debauchery.

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JIMMY COOPER'S BLACK AND WHITE REVUE
(Star and Garter Theater, Chicago)
Butterbeans and Susie, Billy Gulfport, Five Crackerjacks, Brown and Marguerite, Octavia Sumler and Jack Willis (White Southern Dancer), All Score Heavily.

Briefs of the stars easily tell that Jimmie Cooper's White and Black Revue was a box office winner at the Star and Garter, where they opened last Sunday at a matinee for the week. It was one of those shows that people do not look to for fine scenery. It was fun that people look for, and what it takes to make fun Jimmie Cooper showed that his selection of performers of two races has it. Butterbeans and Susie, featured stars of the colored contingent, and of the show for that matter, appeared in a scene, with Eddie Heywood's jazz band as their supporters. Butterbeans, who appears in an argument with his sweetie, Susie, marks time and comic maneuvers with the band, in which he extracts a lot of comedy capers in his limber extremities of legs and body. Susie, who is a singing comedienne from her heart, puts over in rebuttal what the doctors have afforded as a sure cure for blues in actual comedy. Heywood's band, which is a wonderful adjunct to Butterbeans and Susie, includes such musicians as Robert Cheeks, cornet; Henry Waite, banjo; Edward Alexander, saxophone and clarinet; Jonah Walker, trombone and bass; Theodore Johnson, drums, and Mr. Heywood himself at the piano. Gulfport and Brown, who are easily fun wagers, fared well, and Gulfport with Butterbeans were the box office cards of xictory. The Five Crackerjacks (Clifford Gomez, Harry Irons, Raymond Thomas, Tosh Hammed and little Florence Perham, a child soubrette as dancer) settled all disputes regarding the cleverness of the child artist as a dancer. Brown and Marguerite were extraordinary in their dangerous revolution in fancy dancing. "The Cave of Innocence" was a cabaret scene in which the full strength of the contingent is revealed in comedy. Octavia Sumler, who has just blossomed as a star soubrette, for she is somewhat attractive, danced surprisingly well. Among the dancers were Adelaide Jones, Ethel Watts, Roberta Lowery, Eva Bradley, Buster Bowen, Bernice Aiken, Eva Carrera, Margaret Bolden, La Roma Bradley and others. The white performers, who opened the show, are headed by Jimmie Cooper, who is a lightning rod talker and helpful to the whites, but in the last act of the colored element his extemporaneous talk among the dancers may be a little tedious at times, but his efforts fulfill the mission of introductory. Jack Willis, a white Southern dancer, had wonderful movements like the African tribes. Betty Delmonte was chief soubrette in a love scene with Cooper, and also led a chorus in dance numbers. Mildred Steele was quite the chief dancer of the whites. Chuck Wilson was quite a good comedy man and his singing specialty was clever. Sandy Ackland in a Scotch specialty was a big card. Will Brown's black Legree and a surplus of Topsys and Evas was one of the Uncle Tom puzzles of 1926. However, the show was a big fun winner and while the nude dance could well be eliminated there was some regard for a limit which was not exaggerated. So the Cooper show is a winner among the new nature-art style of bare legged damsels and bell-bottomed men.

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CHAPPELLE & STINNETTE IN "KENTUCKY SUE"
(Grand Theater, Chicago)

One of the best musical comedies of the season was the appearance of Chappie Chappelle and Junanita Stinnette in "Kentucky Sue" at the Grand theater. It is so seldom that one sees a good clean musical show and one with a story that these stars can be complimented. While most of the comedians are saturated with racial antics to a levee melee, Mr. McLane's character work and song was legitimate to a marked degree. Columbus Jackson gave good comedy and Jimmie Gillespie was also worthy of mention. Russell Lee was the cop. Miss Stinnette, who can easily be classed as one of the sweetest singers given to nature, her art as an actress and style of dress all add to the picture in her high calling as a musical comedy star. Mr. Chappelle, whose high tenor voice grows richer with age, is now well moulded in duets with Miss Stinnette, whose high notes are richly expanded to par with Chappie's resonance. Few singers can approach her finished rendition of "Kentucky Home." Zac White was another funny comedian, for he and Elizabeth Kewley were gifted artists in eccentrics. George W. Cooper, Jr., and James Thomas were two swift dancers who were very classy in their fancy glides and novelties. There is something about the show that gratines. There are no idle moments and the creole chorus are steppers and their singing is very good, as noticed in the opening chorus with Henrietta Lovelace, a fine soprano, cultured and robust in solo's obligato and ensemble scenes beautifully sung and presented. The Kentucky Sue Night Hawks was a very good set of musicians, under the direction of Edward W. Bailey, Jr., whose practical knowledge of music is so pronounced that the task of all the singers becomes easy, with no fear of the usual loud noisy players that kill the voices of singers and displease those who love to hear them. Large audiences were proof that this show was well liked. They are appearing this week at the Lincoln theater, Louisville, Ky.

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BON BON MINSTRELS
(Apollo, Chicago)

The new invasion of Norman Thomas' musical comedy company at the Apollo on 47th street, Chicago, has resulted in full houses at every performance. In order to show off the talent of Alex Lovejoy and Frankie Jaxon, Manager Emil Stary decided to have Norman Thomas present his company for one week only in a minstrel show, which was decidedly enjoyed by the large audiences who assembled nightly all last week. The singing of Miss Naomi Hunter was a vocal treat even in the presentment scenes. Norman Thomas appears on the stage alone and in his thrilling recitation calls attention that the minstrels are advancing, and to the surprise of the audience the procession comes marching to the music of the band through the aisles of the stage. The girls, who were all attired in Uncle Sam suits with white and black striped pants and purple coats, including stovepipe hats, was a fine brigade to look upon. Among those who scored in specialties were Rookie Davis (Edna), an anguiar dancer; Glennie Cheeseman, soubrette contortionist and dancer; Lillian Stokes, Rose Summerville and Lydia Bourke, three stage beauties, and particularly the latter, were high grade dancers. The side-spliting trio of fun is always apparent when Norman Thomas in his classy straight work feeds the big Lovejoy and little Jaxon with the fun bellows of joy which causes them to lose their heads and set their audiences wild. The like has not been seen on the South Side. There will be no more minstrels, however. Mr. Thomas is to produce another comedy yet unnamed next week, and musical comedy productions are to be a permanent feature. The screen will otherwise furnish serious and comic pictures.

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STAGE NOTES

Billy McClain is now running a theater in Buffalo, N. Y.

Jolly John Larkins is now in Chicago, having arrived from Washington, D. C., where he was the guest of S. H. Dudley.

The first year of Cary B. Lewis in servitude as acting manager and publicity man of Ascher's Metropolitan theater, Chicago, will be functioned by a special bill he will offer on Tuesday, February 15, and let us hope that he will make a speech. Among artists to appear are Laverta Holt, Mae Alix, Charles Mills, a baritone recently from Europe; Hazel Thompson Davis, dancer, and others. The bill for this week includes Mada Jenkins, a new soprano, with Sammy Stewart's orchestra. Mabel Griffin and Emma Brown appeared as the Griffin Sisters last week.

Martin and Walker opened Monday at the Monogram, Chicago, in "The Pawnbrokers," with George Crawford in the cast.

The Lafayette Players, with Andrew S. Bishop and Cleo Desmond, in "The Panther," opened Monday at the Grand theater, Chicago. Laura Bowman, J. Lawrence Criner, Sidney Kirkpatrick, Arthur T. Ray, Charles Moore, A. B. De Comathiere are in the cast.

"Plantation Days" is touring the middle west. Dave and Thressie, Ada Brown, Mason and Bailey, Blanche Calloway, Roger Matthews, Three Browns, dancing demons, and the Hollywood Four and a chorus under direction of Harry Swanagan are features of the company.

Miller and Lyles are to star next season. Lew Leslie, manager of Florence Mills, tried to engage Miller and Lyles to go abroad to support her in Europe, we understand.

In a recent Chicago interview Flournoy Miller is understood to have said: "I wish it was possible for us to land Bill Robinson (Bojangles) and Florence Mills as added attractions."

Paul Robeson is on another concert recital tour which may include Chicago, according to press notes. There is no reason why Mr. Robeson should be frightened about coming to Chicago. His Spirituals recital last season at Orchestra hall denoted that he has a fine voice, which means that he will need a real vocal education to be a second Roland Hayes. The nearest artist to Hayes is George R. Garner, robust tenor, now in Europe.

William D. Sulzer, baritone recital artist of Cincinnati, O., is on a visit in Chicago, where he once resided during his studies at a conservatory.

Harry Liddler will leave for New York at the end of his engagement at the Windsor theater of the Windy City.

Edward W. Bailey, formerly bandmaster of the 803rd Infantry band, is musical director of "Kentucky Sue" company. Mr. Bailey is a very fine pianist and musician.

The Four Pepper Shakers—Leonard (Blue) Scott, Bonny Allen, Alonzo Bozand and Rastus Lee—have arrived in Chicago.

Sara Venable, who has been quite ill, is the guest of a retired actress known as Alberta Ormes professionally, at 16 East 53rd street, Kansas City. The Bell Brothers, twin dancers of her act, are filling dates in Chicago.

The new show at the Sunset Cafe, Chicago, is the Sunset Merrymakers, staged by Percy Venable. Two outstanding features include Rector and Cooper. Eddie Rector, who can be reckoned today as the world's greatest buck dancer, has a very capable partner in Ralph Cooper. Louis Armstrong, expert cornetist, who features "The Butter and Egg Man," is a prime attraction. Other Sunset stars are Charles Ray, another rival dancer; Lillian Westmoreland, double voiced marvel; Mae Alix and Mae Fanning, two star soubrettes; Slick White and George Staten. Manager Glazers appears to be making a record, following after Izie Shorr in good management.

Bessie Smith, record star, was taken suddenly ill at the Koppin theater one night last week in Detroit, Mich. The curtain had to be run down and the audience dismissed.

Virginia Liston, record star, was shot by her ex-sweetheart last Monday week. Later account appears elsewhere in this issue.

Snow Fisher, who was taken to the Cook County hospital last week in Chicago, dangerously ill with pneumonia, was reported dying as The Courier goes to press. If his death

"Black Bottom" Nobody's Property, Paris Verdict

PARIS, Feb. 9.—(AP)—"Black Bottom" is a generic term and therefore the property of no particular person. This ruling was made today by Rene Demande, president of the Music Publishers' Syndicate, acting as an arbiter in a case growing from a claim made by M. Salabert, a music publisher. Salabert sought to prevent anybody else in France from publishing a "Black Bottom."

NEGROES PLAN FOR MARDI GRAS

(By The Associated Negro Press)

New Orleans, La., Feb. 7.—In recognition of the one hundredth anniversary of Mardi Gras, the King of Zulus, omnipotent ruler of New Orleans Negroes on Mardi Gras day is on his way to this city and representative Negroes are making preparations to receive his majesty, with all the pomp and glory that his presence will demand, on his arrival at the head of the New Basin canal. A. Leroy Moss, a prominent undertaker, will impersonate the king but the identity of the queen is being kept a dark secret. Excursions from various sections of the state will bring thousands of substantial colored citizens to New Orleans on that occasion.

COLORED MUSICAL COMEDY PLEASES AT MIDNIGHT SHOW

Without an act that could be billed as a headline attraction, because every one is on a parity of excellence, "Shufflin Sam From Alabam," one of the foremost colored musical comedy shows on tour in America, played to a packed audience at 81 Decatur street Friday night, in a midnight show for white persons only.

Starting with selections from the Memphis Blue Demon Jazz orchestra at 10:45 o'clock, the show resolved into one continuous round of applause and laughter and only the early hours of Saturday morning prevented a repetition of many of the acts.

Dancing, singing, good chorus work, clever wit and humor from two foremost comedians on the colored stage, coupled with several short comedy skits, made the performance one of the best all round and well balanced shows that has appeared here in a long while.

Something new in the way of dancing was seen when "Peg" Bates literally took the house by storm and stopped the show while it collected many coins that were thrown on the stage. His dancing alone was worth the price of admission and even though he has a peg leg to assist him, he certainly knows his steps.

Sidney Rink and his well trained black mule "Gunpowder" enacted a comedy skit that compares favorably with the best in the country. The part is completed with a wonderful riding act, that was heartily received from an appreciative audience.

Other stars of the company were Victor Scott, Richar Perry, Joe Williams, Susie Sutton and Herbert Whitfield and a fast stepping chorus.

Another big midnight show is scheduled for next Friday night, when Irvin C. Miller's "Red Hot Mamas" will be the attraction.

RULES ON "BLACK BOTTOM."

President of French Music Publishers Decides Anybody Can Use Term.

PARIS, Feb. 9 (AP).—"Black Bottom" is a generic term and, therefore, the property of no particular person.

This ruling was made today by René Demands, President of the Music Publishers' Syndicate, acting as an arbiter in a case growing from a claim by M. Salabert, a music publisher. Salabert sought to prevent anybody else in France from publishing a "Black Bottom."

In making his ruling, M. Demands also declared that the terms "Charleston" and "Foxtrot" were public property."

European Makes Splendid Offer

Scholarship to American Girls by Professor Drysdale Sponsored by Florence Mills

In another part of the theatrical section of today's Amsterdam News will be found an offer from Professor Louis Drysdale of London which should arouse immediate interest among the ambitious young women studying singing in this country.

Professor Drysdale is one of the prominent teachers of Europe and he has won international repute through his accomplishments and a studio on which many of the world's masters have placed their stamp of approval. Through the interest exhibited in his work by Miss Florence Mills, Ivan Browning and other Americans of color, Professor Drysdale decided to offer this scholarship to two colored girls from this country.

The presentation of the successful students at the end of their studies at one of the leading concert halls in London would spell immediate success for any pupil turned out by Professor Drysdale and, as only the most worthy will receive such an honor, it is safe to say that half of the battle for recognition would be won by the aspirant, as a European showing would mean the attention of American audiences upon the return of the scholar to this country.

While this offer will perhaps also be made through other papers after this announcement, The Amsterdam News takes pardonable pride in again being the first to come forward with something more far-reaching and of greater benefit to our people than the silly reproduction of vapid letters and "interviews" from certain performers who seek only the momentary glory of seeing their name in print through the medium of the child-like simplicity of well-meaning but misguided newspaperm[illegible]

ART GROUPS IN WASHINGTON RESUME WORK

Willis Richardson and Georgia Douglass Johnson's Plays In Rehearsal

Washington.—The Ethiopian Art Players, directed by Nathaniel Guy, are about to resume their activities suspended since the New Year.

Alston W. Burleigh, son of the famed Harry T. Burleigh, and Lorry Barnes produced two of Willis Richardson's plays, "The Chipwoman's Fortune," and the "Broken Banjo." Capacity audiences attended the performances at the Playhouse, and all were lavish in their praise of the players. "Simon the Cyrenian," and "Tents of the Arabs" are being readied for presentation at the Dunbar Community Center at an early date.

Mrs. Johnson's Plays

"Different" and Paupolokejo", the latter a contradiction of "White Cargo" by Georgia Douglass Johnson, are also to be presented.

A beautiful African maiden whom a white man loved. The white man professed his love despite the native belief that he did not and the caucasian idea that he should not. Paupolokejo, on the other hand, was a son of an English noblewoman and an African chieftain. A white missionary's daughter on her arrival in Africa fell in love with the half-Negro.

The girl's father learning of the affair attempted to send her away, but so strong was their love, and so true their faith, that unable to thwart the father's plans they decided to die at the hands of Paupolokejo

"DESIRES OF 1927" MAKE BIG HIT AT 81 THEATER

With J. Homer Tutt and Adelaide Hall, two of the foremost actors on the colored stage today, taking the leading roles, "Desires of 1927" literally took the house by storm in the big midnight frolic for white persons only Friday night at 81 Decatur street. It was by far the biggest and best show that has been seen here in many a day. Everything that goes to make up a well balanced and good bill was crowded into a limited amount of time Friday night at 81 Decatur street and unraveled in a way that was well pleasing to the packed audience.

Dancing, singing, tap dancing, monologue, blues singing, and in fact every known trick of the stage was well done Friday night.

Adleiade Hall, a former star of the famous "Shuffling Along" company, of New York, shared equal honors with Homer Tutt and her blues singing was a source of much enjoyment to the packed audience Friday night.

J. Homer Tutt is known to Atlanta's midnight theatergoers, having appeared here before. His singing and spontaneous wit was unusually good and was received with several rounds of whole-hearted applause.

In Pete Nugen, the midnight show presented one of the cleverest aerial tap dancers that has been seen here in a long while. Time and time again he was called back on the stage and only the limited amount of time for the show prevented a repetition of his entire act. Not only was he good at tap dancing but his buck and sliding dance was heartily received.

That "bronze chorus" was the best that has been seen at 81 Decatur street. The dancers certainly knew their steps and had a better change of costume than any other colored show that has ever appeared here. Heretofore the chorus has been one of the weakest parts of the show but it was one of the strongest Friday night.

The monologue and short comedy skits Friday night was far better than usual and practically every word was easily heard over the entire house. Another big show, "Shufflin Sam From Alabam" will be given next Friday night at 10:45 o'clock.

—ROY E. WHITE.

Poor Play Handicaps Negro Group In The Belasco Cup Tourney

The Krigwa Players were not the only Negro Little Theatre group that appeared in the tourney for the David Belasco cup last week. On Thursday night, May 5, the Mansfield Players presented a one-act play, "Off Col'uh" as one of a series of four plays for that evening's entertainment and "Off Col'uh" was the worst play on the bill.

The fact was due in a large measure to the poor vehicle that the cast had to work with. The story was by Amy D. Weber and had to do with an incident in a Harlem cabaret. It was so poorly constructed the audience left the theatre wondering just what "Off Col'uh" was all about. Tom Fletcher, who [illegible] the part of the cabaret proprietor, is not an amateur, as is generally known, but the other two members of the cast were "simon pure" amateurs and showed talent worthy of a much better play.

Miss Juanita Stewart, as the cabaret dancer with many lovers, brought to her part a perfect physique and a charm in manner and voice that somewhat compensated for the poor material with which she had to work.

Leon Drake, as John Jackson, a tap dancer, was the other performer and he showed up very well. Fletcher somewhat overplayed his part. The display of razors and dice in the act made the colored spectators wonder if the author was not a white southerner trying to make the cast live up to her notion as to how Negroes act. Stewart and Mr. Drake in a real drama, for we believe they possess unusual talent.

We would like to see Miss

Of the other plays presented Thursday evening, "Mr. Sampson," the English play by the Welwyn Garden City Theatre Society, was the best. "The Delta Wife" by the Memphis Little Theatre was also exceptionally good.

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEGRO EMPLOYEES ATTEMPT TO JUSTIFY SEGREGATION POLICY OF WHITE THEATRICAL PRODUCER.

Express

Members Address Open Letter to Public Condemning Publicity of of Event.

2-19-27

LOS ANGELES, Calif., Feb 19—A. CNB)—In an attempt to justify the jim crow policy adopted by their white employer, Arthur Hockwald, four Colored members, Freita B. Shaw, Margaret Jackson, Tom Cross and Thomas Harris of the "Strut-tin' Sam from Jackson, Tom Cross and Thomas Harris of the "Strutin' Sam from Alabam'" musical comedy, in an open letter published in a well-known journal added insult to injury when instead of offering an apology in behalf of their employer to the Colored citizens of South California, they attempt to justify his damnable attempt to establish a segregation policy for Colored shows when playing Los Angeles theatres.

JASBO BROWN ON THE AIR.

"Jasbo Brown," the poem written by DuBose Heyward around the legendary Mississippi steamboat negro said to be the first singer of jazz, will be the feature of the program on Tuesday evening, between 9 and 10 o'clock, to be broadcast through WEAF and affiliated stations. Nathaniel Shilkret has written an original musical score especially for the occasion, with spiritual and jazz variations to suit the mood and text of the poem.

The poem describes an itinerant negro singer of uncertain mood, who for years entertained travelers on the Mississippi River. As his luck or feelings changed, his music went from wild flights of syncopation to the most mournful spirituals, all improvised as he went along. He was known as Jasbo Brown, and as such he finally found his way to a Chicago cabaret and to questionable fame as the originator of jazz.

The program will include a series of popular concert numbers, with solos by Virginia Rea and Barbara Maurel. Miss Rea will sing the Shadow Song from Myerbeer's "Dinorah," and Miss Maurel has chosen "A Thrush in the Moonlight."

On Anniversary of Year's Engagement in Negro Version of "Carmen," She Calls Its Frowning Critics "Hypocrites."

By BERNARD SIMON
(In N. Y. Herald Tribune.)

The Belasco Theater is no ordinary playhouse with limited space backstage, so it was not within a cramped dressing room cluttered with costumes and articles of make-up, but in a quiet, dimly-lighted, mirrorless greenroom that we interviewed Lenore Ulric on the night she completed a year's engagement in "Lulu Belle."

Courier
2-26-27
Pittsburg Pa

Miss Ulric seems to run to long engagements at the Belasco Theater. She played "Kiki" in that house for 600 performances, "The Harem" for more than half that number, and had splendid successes there in "The Son-Daughter" and "Tiger Rose." Now she is creeping up on her record in "Kiki" as she plays that turbulent Negro version of Carmen, "Lulu Belle."

Don't you get tired of playing the same role for so long?" we asked, without blushing for the triteness of the question.

Miss Ulric gave the right answer.

"Not at all," she said. "I love the theater, and I'm just like a fire-horse at the sound of a bell—when 7 o'clock comes I want to rush off to the theater and spend that thrilling hour in my dressing room getting ready for my part.

"But, still," she continued, following the time-honored formula of actresses giving interviews, "I sometimes do wish for a little change—a kind of repertory arrangement, you know. I've asked Mr. Belasco to let me receive some of my previous roles for special matinees, or perhaps sandwich them in between regular performances of 'Lulu Belle.' I'd love to play 'Kiki' again, just for a few times. But on the whole, I'm very happy to keep playing in one play for a year or more. Some people may think it a loss to spend a whole year of one's life repeating the lines of just one play. But you don't just repeat the lines—you constantly find new things in your role. Why, I play 'Lulu Belle' quite differently now than I did when the play first began its run—every night it is a new, fresh experience to me."

She speaks with almost as rapid a pace as she does in her play, and when she wants to accentuate a point her eyes become hard, narrow slits. Her eyes have a way of snapping very brightly at you.

As she talked we grew aware of some strange inconsistency in her. After a while we discovered what it was—her voice and her nose don't match. That isn't supposed to be funny. Miss Ulric's voice is the husky, hard-boiled voice of Lulu Belle herself, and her nose is the thinnest, most delicate, most aristocratic nose you could imagine. As a hundred thousand or more persons have attested by having gone to see her play, she is beautiful. Without any disparagement of Clara Bow, Elinor Glyn made a mistake in not getting Lenore Ulric to personify her idea of IT. But of all Miss Ulric's charms her nose is the most nearly perfect.

Her husky voice is, then, a jarring incongruity when one looks at her nose. Miss Ulric referred to her hard voice s dly as a sacrifice she has had to make to act her roles, explaining that she hopes to recover its original quality for singing. But it is only her voice which has suffered, for her diction is far from careless.

"Now about all this censorship business," we said; "what do you think of the people who have accused 'Lulu Belle' of being a wicked play?"

"I think they are meddling hypocrites. I have heard so much of that kind of thing that I am thoroughly tired of it. I feel exceedingly offended at all the slurs that have been cast at 'Lulu Belle.' I had the play for five years before it was produced and I never thought that it was immoral—I shouldn't be playing in it if I thought it was. The lesson it teaches is based on the statement in the Bible—'the wages of sin is death.' At many performances nice old ladies come backstage to tell me they think it's a fine play. That must mean something. All those people who come to see the play seem to like it, and they can't all be immoral themselves.

"There must be a balance in theatrical taste—neither too much fanatic prudery nor too much radical license."

Obviously enough, "Lulu Belle" represents Miss Ulric's idea of a middleground of frankness in the theater. So we hesitated to ask what she considered an example of radical license. Instead we politely asked how she came to have such broad-minded views in this mid-Victorian age.

"Oh, by contrary, I suppose," she said. "I was brought up in Milwaukee in a very strict home—two of my uncles were priests and my grandmother wanted me to be a nun. I was sent to a parochial school. But the air of propriety on all sides of me turned me into a rebel, and I remember that I was always being spanked at school—and it wasn't for not knowing my lessons either. But I've grown out of being contantly rebellious. I merely want tolerance instead of narrowmindedness."

A stage manager came to announce the half-hour and Miss Ulric left us to spend the next 30 minutes in applying the brown tinge on her arms and legs that makes her into the high-yaller vamp of San Juan Hill called Lulu Belle. And one wonders, afterward, if any Lulu Belle in real life ever had Lenore Ulric's enormous vivacity.

Courier's Philadelphia Editor Invited to New York to Review "Lulu Belle;" Now In Second Year.

W. Rollo Wilson, Famous Sports Scribe, Says Play Kayoed Him Again; Record Run Proof of Its Good Entertainment.

Editor's Note: Through The Pittsburgh Courier's New York Representative the Belasco Theatre presented Mr. W. Rollo Wilson, the Courier's Philadelphia Representative, two reserved seats to review Lulu Belle at the Belasco Theatre, 44th street near Broadway, Wednesday evening, February 11, as the play entered its second year. On Saturday evening, February 19, the show gave its 432d performance. Mr. Wilson, who is a sports expert, writes from that angle.

By W. ROLLO WILSON

NEW YORK, Feb. 24.—Contender for the long-run championship now is Lulu Belle, David Belasco's play with Lenore

Ulric in the title role. Contender, I say, because one other show has had a longer stay along the Gilded Way. But, except this show, which has never been isolated and classified and therefore is a maverick in theaterdom, Lulu and her evil sophistication are packing them in and have done so for more than a year.

A bird who knocks them dead thataway must have a punch. One of the press box and the ringside who has glorified in the homeric bludgeonings of the Ruth, the desperate leap of the Hubbard, the rapier thrusts of the Delaney, the broadsword swings of the Firpo, the T. N. T. explosions of the Wills must need see what manner of punch Lulu has. And so I hied myself to see her once again for I had been one of those favored mortals who took a Brodie on her when she opened in Philadelphia.

I sought a punch and found several of it. You who thought Lenore perfect in her assumption of the role of the Magdalene, who wondered how she ever imitated the husky voice and blatant mannerisms of the "solicitor" should see and hear her now. Truly, she is perfection made perfect.

Such an insolent and suggestive voice comes only from the shadows and areaways in the evil places of the world—Wylie avenue and South street; the "Barbary Coast" and the Rue Cannenbierre; Whitechapel and Doyers street. From the courtesans of long-dead Carthage, the harlots of Rome, the concubines of Israel, the Geisha girls of Japan, the kept women of "Boul 'Mich'." Never before has an actress portrayed so accurately the voice of her character.

One wonders what could have been the genesis of the woman Lulu Belle. What folly could have fathered such an abandoned prostitute as she? For here we have a woman without a conscience, without ever a redeeming trait of any kind. Here in her is evil unalloyed with pity or love. A past mistress of the world's oldest profession, she lures them and leaves them. The only weak spot in her armor is a superstitious belief in dreams. Her contemptuous defiance masks itself as bravery of a sort. Never does passion blind her eye to the main chance.

Lulu Belle! Distillate of the evils of polyglot races; Here is the punch which keeps her name in the lights of Broadway. Men and women go to see the most debased character of the stage in recent years. Lulu Belle, reincarnation of the Circe who transmuted men into swine!

Once, near the end, it seemed that her heart softened when she arranged to see deluged George and while the ex-convict eagerly described his fragmentary plans for a little home in Jersey. But, alas, she but played with us and mocked him and lived the brief remainder of her destiny a heartless woman. In brief, she is the spirit of evil made flesh.

Another punch which pulls them in is the colorful background of Negroes at work and at play, though one feels that the "at work" is under—and the "at play" overemphasized. But the play is a cross-section of life in the underworld and one must not hope for much work there except as incidental.

Here, however, is a group of sterling actors some of whom bear names familiar to those who remember their "Abyssinia," their "Red Moon" and the more recent successes of the ill-starred Lafayette Players.

Evelyn Preer, as vivid as the Ulric, brings youth and pep to her part of Ruby Lee, flashing briefly and gloriously in her role. "Uncle Gustus," portrayed by Lawrence Eddinger, is played with sympathy and understanding. Eddie Thompson, Elizabeth Williams, Ollie Burgoyne, Seifert Pile, Mattie Wilkes, Zaidee Jackson and others have "their little hour upon the stage and are heard no more."

At the last one can only sympathize with George (Henry Hull). He was the chief victim of this jazzy Jezebel. To the stay-at-homes who never wink back at temptation his conduct may seem far-fetched and inexcusable, but to those who have loafed along the avenues of adventure, it's posible, it's possible. Jack Hartley is not so convincing as Butch Cooper, the fighter and quasi pimp. I do not recall whether he was cast in that part in Philadelphia. And, of course, a sports scribe recognized an old acquaintance in Tammany Young.

Whether such a show serves a purpose in the world of art is not for me to say. I am neither a critic nor a reformer of the stage. But for downright entertainment, it is something different from anything ever attempted. To enjoy one's second attendance on a play is the best proof of its attraction. Well **it kayoed me again.**

NO NEGRO PLAYERS USED IN "APPEARANCES"

By the Associated Negro Press

Los Angeles Calif. April 13—Cast for "Appearances," [illegible] by Garland Anderson, which is to begin a run at the Magestic Theatre here on April 11, was selected Friday, April 1 and rehearsal began [illegible] which calls for three colored characters being played with an all white cast.

RACE DRAMA SCORES IN HOLLYWOOD

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., Mar. 10.—(P. C. N. B.)—A race drama has hit Hollywood and survived! A daring play on race prejudice, where a white woman marries a Negro and where the situations are crammed with all the hells that white prejudice and fury on one hand, and the thinly hidden Congo lor on the other hand can create.

"It may involve a question of race prejudice, but then . . . . Well, what matter?" Writes Edwin Schallort, in the Los Angeles Times. "It can be announced almost with a fanfare of trumpets that the first theatre recently has inaugurated the idea in Hollywood to enormous acclaim."

Not O'Neil's Best

"All God's Chillun Got Wings" is far more from being O'Neil's best, but it is a courageous, pitiless, truthful working out of a tragic distressing situation; a real chapter from life existing in the racial mixture of our teeming cities," states Monroe Lathrop, dramatic editor of the Los Angeles Evening Express. "It leaves the problem of miscegenation just where it was. It brings home the tragedy of its denial or realization, and of the inhumanity of passions, which guide people, who assume superiority merely from the pigment of the skin."

Black Man's Soul Wasn't There

"Irving Pichel (White) plays the black Jim Harris," continues Mr. Lathrop. "In New York, a Negro actor, Paul Robeson, essayed the character. The intelligence and ability of Mr. Pichel have been manifested in many roles, but they are not equal to the creation of illusion that many before him have tried and failed at. The white man playing a Negro remains a white man. The features, the vocal peculiarities, the soul of the black man wasn't there."

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.

Our European Letter

The Amsterdam News Is the Only Paper Published by Colored People in This Section of the Country Which Has Been Giving Readers Information About the Negro Performer in Europe Through Bona Fide Correspondents

By IVAN H. BROWNING, London, Eng.

WE are all anxiously waiting for the news of the two colored shows, Ethel Waters in "Africana" and Miller and Lyles in "Bang Tang." Please extend to Miss Waters, Mr. Dancer and Miller and Lyles, through the Amsterdam News, [illegible] wishes, as all of us over here are hoping that their shows are the beginning of the colored shows and revues coming back stronger than ever.

LESLIE HUTCHINSON, the clever pianist and baritone, is really the most "royalty entertaining" gentleman of color that has perhaps ever been in England. He is truly a busy man and on good authority it is known that his income runs 'way up in pounds which are equal on par with the American dollars. "Hutch" has certainly arrived and, as they say in England, "it is jolly well nice when you know it."

JIM & JACK, the nifty dancing boys, are at the Pavilion, Glasgow.

LAYTON & JOHNSTONE are at the Gaiety Theatre, Aryle, England.

SCOTT & WHALEY, after a two weeks' run at the big Pallidium, London, are out of town for a fortnight.

RUCKER & PERRIN are at the Empire, Birmingham, England.

THE ever-popular and sweet little Florence Mills and "Blackbirds" are easily breaking all records in the provinces, having just closed in Scotland, where they were at the Palace, Manchester, for two weeks. The revue is a tremendous success and everybody's happy and enjoying their tour of England.

JOHNNY HUDGINS is continuing his fine success at the classy Ambassadeurs in Paris and is indeed a popular favorite in the "unusual city." Hal Sherman, the American comedian, is doing a number of Hudgins' dances in the Casino de Paris Revue, where he is being featured with the famous Dolly sisters. From the latest reports, Sherman will certainly have to lay off the clever Hudgins material, and a very important Paris paper has said that Sherman should stop copying after Hudgins.

CRICKET SMITH, the well-known cornetist, is in charge of the red hot band at Zelli's Cabaret in Paris and Glover Compton is the pianist. Glover and wife are expecting to go to Berlin for a while before returning to dear old Chicago, where they are longing to be. They are having a most enjoyable and successful stay in Europe.

TONY TUCK, banjoist, singer and guitar player, late of the Versatile 3, is doing his clever single at the Empire, Glasgow, Scotland.

JACKSON & BLAKE, the colored American comedian and his English partner, are still having fine success and are on the Gulliver tour.

WILL GARLAND and his Creole Revue, headed by Eddie Emerson, the clever colored English comedian, are playing the independent theatres in and around London.

THE Four Harmony Kings are at the Hippodrome in Bristol. Bristol is one of the finest educational centers in England and a wonderfully historical little city. Quite musical indeed. The Harmony Kings have plenty of competition this week here, as we are on the bill with one of the finest choirs in northern England. My, my, how they do sing! There are one hundred and fifteen of them, all men, and, believe me, they do sing divinely.

J. ROSAMOND JOHNSON and Taylor Gordon are at the Stoll Cinema House in Kingsway, and are a big success.

CARPENTER & HATCH are still entertaining the British public in their interesting way. They are expecting to open in Germany early in the new season.

WILLIAMS & TAYLOR are their usual hit in "Blackbirds." The Three Eddies are another outstanding hit in the revue, while Hamtree Harrington and Cora Green are real English favorites now. The "Three Pullman Porters," Lloyd, Slow Kid Thompson and Johnny Nitt, make them "holler for more" constantly.

MISS ADA BRICKTOP, after a brief stay in Berlin, has returned to Paris, but will soon return to the German city for the coming season.

GUS HASTON, Esq., the well-known manager of the late Versatile 3, will shortly sail for America and will spring a big surprise soon after reaching New York. I met Gus in Piccadilly the other day, looking as sharp as ever, having come up from Brighton Beach, where he and his popular wife have been sojourning for the past fortnight.

I REGRET so very much to learn of the death of my good friend Miss Mattie Wilkes. I have always admired her and I am sure her death will be a great loss to the Negro profession. She was indeed a very clever woman and there are few women of our race who have enjoyed the unusual success that this remarkable lady did, and there is certainly no doubt about her having lived a most interesting life. Being well known and having many, many friends, they will miss her, as she was without a doubt a lovely and very charming lady. Her death is really a great shock to me and I shall pray that she is resting in peace.

MADAM JOSEPHINE BAKER has closed her Club Chez Josephine Baker in Paris during the hot summer months. It is truly a funny thing to me how the American white papers have worried so about the report of Miss Baker having married a count and, aside from that, I fail to understand why they hate to admit that she is an American Negro girl. There are many, many papers that wrote Miss Baker up as the cross-eyed comedy girl everywhere she appeared with us as we traveled from city to city in America in "Shuffle Along." They seem to think that if it is true that she is married to an Italian count she cannot be an American Negro girl. The majority of people in America, both white and colored, do not believe in mixed marriages; that is to say, where American Negro men and white women are concerned, and as well as white women and Negro men. Of course, such cases are absolute failures in America, but in any of the European countries nothing is thought of it at all, and I am afraid that too much "to-do" is being made over this sort of thing.

London, Eng., 7-25-27.

Mr. Romeo L. Dougherty,
Dramatic Editor, Amsterdam News,
New York City, N. Y.

DEAR Romeo: I trust this will find you enjoying splendid health. As you will note from the looks of the list of Negro acts, even in the dull season, they are all busy and are really doing very well indeed. London is crowded with visitors and there is special interest shown at this time because of two dark rulers visiting England. The King of Egypt has just left here, where he has been royally entertained, also President King of Liberia. There is very little difference, if any, in the entertainment accorded President King and the King of Egypt. I guess very little will be said in the American white papers about the African president being so highly entertained and being the guest of the British Government and being the special guest of King George at the annual garden party held at Buckingham Palace. I guess it even hurts their souls to think that the European countries respect this Negro president, especially when the American Government and white press thought so little about his visit over there some time ago. Nevertheless, President King is really being accorded every courtesy that his position calls for, and he is indeed a very busy man in London at this time.

Everybody's in tip top shape over here and anxiously waiting to hear about the success and the coming back of the Negro in musical comedy and revues.

Just as I about closing this letter Berry is reading to me about Dempsey knocking Sharkey out. What a pity. But him doing that only shows my friend Harry Wills up worse than ever.

I do hope we will have a real Negro heavyweight again shortly, but of course he will have to be absolutely a new sensation before the Ofays will even give him any chance at all.

Kindly say hello to everybody for me, Romeo, and, as they say in England, "all the best and cheerio."

Sincerely yours,

IVAN HAROLD BROWNING.

London, England,
Care of American Express, S. W.

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

J. A. Rogers Gives His Impression of New Play at the Provincetown

And Brings to His Readers a Comprehensive Account in His Usual Lucid Style Marked With the Simplicity Which Has Won Him Such a Large Following as an Author

(By J. A. ROGERS)

"IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM."
A play in seven scenes by Paul Green, presented at the Provincetown Playhouse. Settings by Cleon Throckmorton.

Bud Gaskins.....Frank Wilson
Lije Hunneycutt.....Thomas Mosley
Puny Avery.....James Dunmore
Abraham McCranie....Julius Bledsoe
Colonel McCranie.....L. Rufus Hill
Lonnie McCranie.....H. Een Smith
Goldie McAllister.....Rose McClendon
Muh Mack, Abraham's aunt, Abbie Mitchell
Douglass McCranie, Abraham's son, R. J. Huey
Eddie Williams.....Melvin Greene
Lanie Horton.....Armithine Lattimer
Nelly McNeil.....Stanley Greene

At the Provincetown Theatre is again being demonstrated the fact that tragedy—real, searing tragedy—as poignant and gripping as anything ever written by Shakespeare or Eschybis, is to be found in Negro life in America.

The vehicle for this tragedy is a play, "In Abraham's Bosom," written by Paul Green, professor of philosophy in the University of North Carolina, bringing out with power and sympathy the terrific difficulties that beset the path of any Negro in the South who sets out to be other than a white folk's nigger," in its varying grades.

The hero, Abraham McCranie, who has had a hard struggle, directly as caused by the white people and indirectly as caused by them, through the psychology forced both on himself and his own people, decides to do something to advance his race, but is dogged by adversity at every step, simply because he will not "knuckle under" to the whites.

Abraham wants to be a great educator and starts to gratify his great ambitions by opening a little school in a turpentine district, but finally loses out after three years because he has beaten a disobedient pupil, and the white folks, working by subterranean methods, find it a good way to hit back at him.

But Abraham is persistence itself, the dragging years failing to dim his hopes, for has he not a son, Douglas, who has had better advantages than he, and is going to accomplish all that he had failed for one cause of another to accomplish? Douglas, however, turns out to be worthless and a wastrel and, to make matters worse, Abraham loses his job. Then he decides to return home, taking with him his faithful wife and his mother, Muh Mack.

Home again all Abraham's old ambition returns; it is a trade school this time—white folks want Negroes to learn trades—but again his failure to be a white folks' nigger gets him deeper and deeper into trouble, until it leads to the murder of his white half-brother, Colonel McCranie, his tormentor, and the clutches of the mob, to which Abraham pleads for death after the slaying of his half-brother.

The play is a triumph not only for its author, but its interpreters, Julius Bledsoe, though a newcomer, gave promise through his excellent and impressive interpretation of being a new star in the dramatic firmament above the color line. The acting of Rose McClendon as Goldie, Abraham's wife, was marked throughout with sincerity and the deep sympathetic understanding which she brought to the play: Abbie Mitchell acted the part of Muh Mack to perfection, and so did Armintine Lattimer, gum-chewing pupil of Abraham; nor can hardly less be said of the other players.

Despite the fact that in its last analysis the play smacks of white man's interpretation, it reveals great understanding of what the aspiring Negro really faces in the South, and is, in its effect, a powerful plea for justice.

The scene is laid in North Carolina, which has the reputation of being one of the most advanced of the Southern States.

Charleston, Black Bottom Craze, Made Negro A King

PARIS, France, Dec. 30.—(A.N.P.)—The Negro is king in New York, he is king in Paris, and now he has established himself in Geneva, where all the aristocracy has turned out to learn the phenomena of the Charleston and the Black Bottom, and of acrobatics and grimaces, says "Comedia," a French journal.

The principal artists of the colored troupe at Geneva, "The Southern Delights," are Miss Reaves, Willie Robins and Honey Boy Thompson.

E. F. writes in the "Suisse," a French-Swiss paper of Geneva:

"The Negro is king, and how quickly he has conquered us! A dozen years ogo he was virtually unknown in our theaters, but already he has entered with his strange fetishes. America came, (to save Europe, as everyone knows), and departed, leaving us the League of Nations, jazz and the songs of gentlemen of color.

"The Negro Revue, offered at the Comedie, is a slight thing, but interpreted wildly, without restraint, by a troupe whose members, I dare say, have fire in the 'bottom' and a laugh on their gleaming teeth. Their warmth, their abandon, offers solace to the men of Europe, too cold themselves, too much given to the worship of reason.

"It is not merely that the 'Southern Delights' are pretty and have impaccable limbs, but they offer piquant contrasts more pleasing than the deadly uniformity of Anglo-Saxon girls. They sing agreeably, and if not with perfect precision, with an amazing suppleness. Miss Reaves excels in sentimental songs and lends to her voice the tender colors of a saxophone. Willie Robbins, and Honey Boy Thompson are not only accomplished acrobatic dancers, but masters of comic expression. Praise is due also to Montgomery, with his delicate sense of ce. Cook is marvelous wi astonishingly supple body, and tus Banks, who is not only raceful in everything he does, but crobatic to the point of defying the laws of physics.

"Then there is M. F. Mores, excellent and sensitive singer with a warm and ample voice. As for Miss Maud de Forest, she has a verve which bowls one over, a voice of bronze, a fine sense of parody, and robust and agil legs which, when they 'black-bottom' give her body the most amusing movements.

"What is it, in short, that these Negroes bring us? Frenetic rhythms, not as varied as they seem (nor they are based always on syncopation and contre-temps) rhythms languishing and tender, a comedy always leaning toward parody, dances which return invariably to the same steps, varied only by amazing acrobats. And one feels that in the course of the performance the bag of tricks has been emptied.

"Nevertheless they give us two hours of frank and lively pleasure. the jazz of musicians adroit and 'spirituals' and a precise and subtle conductor who, without seeming to touch them, lets loose these tempests whose magnificent disorder is an effect of the finest art."

AFRICAN FARCE TICKLED PARIS

Paris, Jan. 1927 (A.N.P.)—"Le Village Blanc" (The White Village,) a joyous Negro farce i s the newest thing to tickle French palates. Critics are raving about it.

In the play a number of whites have been shipwrecked on an African coast and are taken in charge by the natives who make them live in a section of the town by themselves and compel them to change their manner of living and of worship and become good Africans.

The satire is evident. The white district in the play is a counterpart of the black belt in America. Instead of the term "good Negro" you hear so much in the U. S., the play uses the term "good white man."

PARIS OPENS WAR ON BLACK BOTTOM WITH OLD TIME "CHIBRELI"

[Chicago Tribune Press Service.]

PARIS, Jan. 6.—While the Charleston and Black Bottom are raging through the Parisian cabarets, displacing the European dances, a counter attack on the American steps has been started by a Paris dancing master.

After banishing Jazz steps from his establishment in Place Pigalle, in the heart of the Montmartre, M. Charles Perrot, leading dancehall proprietor, has announced a series of courses in the "Chibreli."

"Parisians and foreign visitors may not know what the Chibreli is, and that is the reason I am going to teach it," the dancing master said. "It is a regular dance, just as good and better than the modern dances. There is nothing tame about it, though it has been known for hundreds of years in the little district of Auvergne, where the peasant folk dance it."

Gilpin To Play Leading Role In New Production

NEW YORK, Dec. 16.—The Mayfair Productions, who are presenting a revival of "The Emperor Jones" at the Mayfair Theater, announce that they are casting for their forthcoming production of "The Bottom of the Cup" a play of the Carolina Plantation days, written by John Tucker Battle and William J. Perlman. Charles S. Gilpin will, of course, essay the leading role, a part which is strikingly parallel to the life of Christ. The Wayfair Productions will star Charles S. Gilpin in this vehicle and the supporting cast will be named in a day or two. S. Iden Thompson will do the settings and the piece will open at the Mayfair Theater on January 5th. This, of course, means that "The Emperor Jones" is in its last two weeks at the cozy theater. It will, however, be held over and played from time to time at special matinees.

CULVER CITY, Calif., Jan. 27.—(Pacific Coast News Bureau.)—Miss Janie F. Hoskins, age 3, is now the world's youngest film actress. After serving an apprenticeship on the screen as an extra for nearly a year, Janie, better known as "Mango" on the screen, has recently been promoted by Hal Roach to regular membership in the "Our Gang" cast and placed on a regular salary basis.

McGowan Gets New Contract.

Celebrating the sixtieth production of the two reel "Our Gang" comedies under the five years' direction of Robert McGowan, Mr. Roach presented his famous director with a new five year contract, starting on April 15. Roach also announced the promotion of Janie Hoskins, the three-year old sister of Allen G. Hoskins, aged six, professionally known as "Farina" as a permanent member of the cast; and the possible selection of Jean Darling to replace Mary Kornman, who with Mickey Daniels (Freckles) is touring the vaudeville world.

The present personnel of the "gang" includes the fat boy, Joe Frank Cobb; the inimitable Farina; Jackie Condon, Jay R. Smith, Scotter Lowry and Mango.

"IN ARABY THE BLEST"
Another study of Maurice Hunter, by Paul A. Brody, showing the model's power of characterization.

Hannah Washington In 'Us Banch' Comedies

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Jan. 27—(Pacific Coast News Bureau).—Little Hannah Washington, two year old motion picture marvel, has been signed by the Sunset Studios as a prominent member of "Us Bunch" comedies. "The Big Big Raid" will be the first "Us Bunch" picture. Hannah is the colored juvenile in the cast and is considered a "find."

FLORENCE MILLS TELLS LONDONERS ABOUT "THE SOUL OF THE NEGRO"

Writes Article in London Daily and Says She Fought Way to Success in Spite of Many Handicaps Because of Her Color

"COLOR BARRIERS ARE TOTTERING"

(From the Sun-Chronicle, London, England.)

By FLORENCE MILLS

"What a pity she isn't white." This was the remark made by a woman as I left the stage door the other evening.

It was not the first time such a comment has been passed to me. It is the eternal burden of the colored people—the penalization for an accident of birth—to be made to feel out of focus with the rest of humanity.

There are some people I have met who appear to find it difficult to credit a Negro with a soul. Perhaps they are prepared to admit that he has a "soul of sorts," but that it is the same plane as that of the white race they refuse to acknowledge.

A few years ago this attitude towards colored people was very marked. Today it is not so much in evidence, but it still exists.

There are still people who think that a Negro has about as much sensitiveness as a brute beast, that he is a person apart, dominated by strange complexes and desires. To them a white soul in a black skin appears an impossible combination.

How absord it all is——how utterably unfair! There is not a colored man or a colored woman in existence who does not bitterly resent the sentiment that drives them beyond the pale.

If only those who consciously or unconsciously outrage the sensibilities of the Negro knew—as I know—what wounds they inflict, what suffering and misery they cause, they would view the man of color from a different perspective. They would know at any rate, that he has a soul not very different from their own.

They would learn something, perhaps, of the acute sensibility of his feelings of his childish trust in human nature of his humanity and instrictive generosity.

For, when it comes down to a matter of solid fact, divorced from prejudice, the Negro instincts, all his feelings are white to the core. He may not be so sophisticated, so developed as the white man, but he is certainly not a human pariah whose rightful place is in the gutter.

There is the little song I sing on the stage that indicates something of the Negro's attitude owards life. He is very much like a small boy flattening his nose against a pasty-cook's window and longing for all the good things on the other side of the pane.

Never had no happiness.
Never felt no one's caress,
I'm just a lonesome bit of humanity
Born on a Friday, I guess.

Then it goes on:—

If the sun forgets no one,
Why don't it shine on me,
I'm a little blackbird,
Looking for a bluebird, too.

There, in a nutshell, you have the inner feeling of the colored people, There is something plaintive about that little song that harmonizes with the tinge of melancholy which is always present in the Negro soul.

He wants so badly to "belong"—and as yet there is no place for him.

But there is not the slightest doubt that the status of the Negro is generally improving. Color barriers are tottering, and he is getting his foot on the ladder of equality.

There are still Negroes who are lynched simply because they are Negroes, but there are also colored men who are barristers, doctors, prominent musicians, actors, poets and writers. And their number is steadily increasing.

In America, despite the very real prejudice that exists, the Negro race is rearing its head, in all branches of social life. In England, non-existent, Negroes have achieved a virtual equality.

Only a few months ago a Negro poet in America produced a volume of serve that proved to be a best-seller. Critics were astonished at his insight and his delicacy of thought and feeling.

But it is a hard struggle I know, for I have been through it. For years before I became an actress and the white people smiled on me I struggled against adveristy and prejudice.

When I was born I was just a poor pickaninny, with no prospects but a whole legacy of sorrow. My parents were far too poor to afford me a good education, and it was obvious that I would have to fend for myself.

One day when I was playing in the street with a number of other children, a white comedian who was appearing close to my home saw me and took a fancy to my face. From him I learned my first song: "Don't cry my little pickanniny."

That was the beginning. At the age of four I appeared with him on the stage with the proud intention of singing my little song. Half-way through I saw a black-faced comedian standing in the wings waiting to go on. His make-up was so startling that I broke off in terror and had to be led off the stage weeping bitterly. From the age of eight, when I appeared in a production called the "Sons of Ham," it has just been one long fight for success. Always there was the bogy of my color barring the way.

That I was able to win through at all was due to sheer determination to rise superior to prejudice.

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

UNPRECENTED DEMAND FOR COLORED PLAYERS BY PRODUCERS IN THEATRICAL FIELD

(International News Service Staff Correspondent.)

New York, Oct. 17.—New York's amusement season having swung into full mometum reveals an unprecedented demand for Negro performers, so much so that at present Negro entertainers of all sorts are being imported daily from every state in the South and as far away as California.

And the principal influences toward this situation have been the high brow producers, including the theatre guild, the provincetown players, Florenz Ziegfeld, Jr., David Belasco and others of high theatrical standing.

The Guild opened its year's run in their theatre with a dramatization of "Porgy," an exposition of the low down life of the darkies in Charleston, employing 46 Negro players and four whites, the latter having minor roles. The Provincetown group revived the pulitzer prize play, "In Abraham's Bosom," with a preponderance of Negro actors. Ziegfeld starts rehearsal today of "Show Boat," Edna Ferber's story, with 40 Negroes in the ensemble. Belasco's "Lulu Belle," with 34 Negro people supporting Leonore Ulric, broke Brooklyn's records last week and is a sensation along the Manhattan "Subway Circuit."

Arthur Hammerstein will open his memorial theatre on Broadway with "Golden Dawn," employing 60 Negroes. Gene Buck is rehearsing "Take the Air," with 6; "Black Velvet," closing this week, has 10; "Sidewalks of New York," a solid sucess, uses 10; "Rang Tang," all-Negro, occupies one of the largest Times Square houses and is in for a run, patronage practically all white; "Emperor Jones," starring Charles Gilpin and other Negroes supporting him, is playing nearby "stands."

The large picture palaces, almost with one voice, have also gone brown skin. The Ace, Roxy, this week has the Jubilee Singers, some 30; the Paramont last week featured the Dixie Choir, of 16, playing elsewhere now on the same local circuit; at the Capitol, James Johnson, Negro, is conducting the white concert orchestra; several specialty performers of the race are scattered about other leading film houses.

The Alhambra, recently a leading uptown Keith vaudeville house, is on a profit basis with a musical stock company, all Negro, with a company of 51 and like the Lafayette and other Harlem Negro shows, reports about 60 per cent white trade. Soon to come are "Gophered" and "The Black Bottom," under standard managements, with colored octors, for Broadway locations. The Mamie Smith Revue, with 25 other people, likewise aimed for the Rialto is rehearsing and a 1927 edition of "7-11" is being cast for similar exploitation.

Florence Mills, recently returned from English and French triumphs, has several starring offers and a first-class vaudeville contract, which he has not yet signed, holding off for $3,500 weekly. For some time the "Black and Tan" cabarets along Lenox Avenue have been a late-hour "blow-off" habit for the jaded. They have increased in numbers, are advertising in the dailies and offering "hotsy totsy" entertainment.

But, more extraordinary, is the announcement that two of last season's night clubs in the swiftest portions of the white belt, both operated by Texas Guinan and in turn padlocked but now waters, who recently closed in her own show, takes over the "300 Club," supported by a dozen white girls. Florence, a Harlem Negress who created a zt of a furore in Paris and has been specially imported, landed last Friday, and will be the sole attraction at the "Texas Guinan Club" on 48th street.

The Columbia Burlesque "Wheel," leading organization of that branch of theatricals, announces three all-Negro and one "mixed" among its shows now girdling its circuit.

Numerous agencies entirely devoted to securing and supplying Negro talent have sprung up and cannot meet the demand. A leading dance teacher of the day is Billy Pierce, Negro, who is getting the call not only from ambitious amateurs and callow professionals, but also from society debs and matrons. Negro jazz bands are the vogue at private parties among the best families.

And Cecil de Mille has sought the picture rights to "Porgy," which requires an almost all-Negro company, a revolutionary innovation for the screen, indeed.

Race Stars In "Show Boat" Compared With Moscow Art Players In "Concerted Pep"

The theatrical department of The Philadelphia Sun, under the heading "Looking 'Em Over" has the following to say regarding the colored stars in Florenz Ziegfeld's "Show Boat," playing in Philadelphia.

"Frank Mandell and Lawrence Schwab are sending a company out to Chicago to play "Good News" there. They wanted the newcomers to see just how the New York and Philadlphia company does it. But they had to dig into their jeans for full-price tickets for their actors and coryphees.

"And it wouldn't be a bad idea at all for Frank and Larry, and even the Shubert boys and Charlie Dillingham, to do the same thing with some of their choruses. That is, to send them over to Philadelphia, get seats at the Erlanger (if possible) and let some of our pulchritudinous but lackadaisical chorus girls see just how 'pep' can be put into musical numbers.

"This refers to the dark-skinned portion of the 'Show Boat' ensemble that Flo Ziegfeld has gathered together. How those dusky ones do revel in their few numbers. Every face in the chorus line carries on the story of the song or scene with pantomimic vigor. Not since the Moscow Art players gave the United States a lesson in ensemble work has there been such concerted 'interest and pep' as by these ebony ones."

Calvin Reviews "Porgy"

A Folk Play By DuBose and Dorothy Heyward, at The Guild Theater, 42nd St. and Broadway, N. Y.—Opened Oct. 10

"PORGY"
A Folk Play by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward At the Guild Theater, 52d Street and Broadway, New York. Opened Oct. 10.

Characters:
(In order of their appearance)

Maria, keeper of the cookshop.... .... Georgette Harvey
Jake, captain of the fishing fleet .... Wesley Hill
Lily ....Dorothy Paul
Mingo .... Richard Huey
Annie .... Ella Madison
Sporting Life ...... Percy Verwayne
Serena, Robbin's Wife............ .... Rose McClendon
Robbins, a young stevedore...... .... Lloyd Gray
Jim, a stevedore.........Peter Clark
Clara, Jake's wife......Marie Young
Peter, the honeyman,...Hayes Pryor
PORGY, a crippled beggar......... .... FRANK WILSON
Crown, a stevedore......Jack Carter
Crown's Bess........EVELYN ELLIS
A Detective........Stanley De Wolfe
Two Policemen ....Hugh Rennie
Maurice McRae
Undertaker .... Leigh Whipper
Scipio .... Melville Greene
Simon Frazier, a lawyer.......... .... A. B. DeComathiere
Nelson, a fisherman.G. Edward Brown
Alan Archdale......Edward Fielding
The Crab Man.......Leigh Whipper
The Coroner.........Garrett Minturn

Residents of Catfish Row, fishermen, children, stevedores, etc.—Clarissa Blue, Marguerite Booth, Lillian Cowan, Muriel Collins, Zora Donahoo, Dorothy Embry, Catherine Francis, Ella Gordon, Rosa Johnson, Marie Remsen, Dorothy West, Musa Williams, Frank Allen, Charles Bailey, Duncan Bourne, Richard Bruce, Edward Chavers, Edward G. Perry, Smith Reed, Eugene Riddick, Charles Taylor, Philip Thomas, Wallace Thurman, Lafayette Walker. Children—Eddie Williams, Ruth Williams, Eunice Belborda, Sylvia Harrigan, Thomas Trisven, William Carroll, Martha Donahoo. Jenkins' Orphanage Band—A. J. Mills, Jesse Coon, John Richardson, John Wilson, Arthur Kennedy, Thaddeus Jenkins, Lester Hubbard, Walter Baske, Samuel Ladson, Aloza Mills, Jr., Erskine Clarke.

Three acts, nine scenes; place Charleston, S. C.; time, present.

Reviewed by FLOYD J. CALVIN

NEW YORK, Nov. 3.—At the end of the first scene of "Porgy" I remarked to the wife, "Isn't this a mess." She urged that we sit a while longer before I passed final judgment. At the end of the second scene things began to get more interesting, and during the third scene I pronounced it a good play and settled down to see it through.

"Porgy" is called a folk play and is laid in South Carolina in the present. During the first scene the average Negro is likely to get the impression it is a burlesque on the race for white pepole to laugh at. But as the play progresses, one can clearly see it is a genuine work of art, depicting a group of people as and defies the elements to strike him down. Which shows that the element of courage under the most distressing conditions is not alone native to the white man.

"Porgy" is a tragic story with many tense and dramatic moments.

At times I wiped my eyes, and at other times I laughed heartily. The acting is superb. Rose McClendon is always penetrating, compelling; Evelyn Ellis is truly wistful, pitiful; Frank Wilson, while his role is not so difficult, plays it well; A. B. DeComethaire is most delightful in his role as lawyer; Leigh Whipper is they really are, with their joys and triumphs, humble though they be, and their trials and tribulations. One forgets that they are Negroes, but remembers that they are human beings, largely the creatures of circumstances with their own peculiar views and philosophies of life.

"Porgy" interested me more as a study in racial relations than as a work of art. The author faithfully shows the psychological effect of the white man's attitude toward the Negro in the South. This colors everything. And although the white man is supposed to be of the "superior" race, the Negro, in his crude, plodding way is many times his equal and sometimes his superior. His very weakness is ofttimes his strength and the Negro does not fail to score that point. And too the white man is shown in many cases, in an effort to prove his superiority, frequently admits by exaggeration, that he knows he is inferior—that is, inferior to the native wit and cunning of the Negro.

Another point which shows the fairness of the author is in the charter "Crown," played by Jack Carter. Crown is a "bad" Negro with unusual courage. When the other Negroes are quaking with fear of a thunderstorm Crown swears as [illegible]

funny and good; Georgette Harvey, Wesley Hill and Dorothy Paul are good, strong supporters of the principals. All the acting is good, remarkably well done.

I noted in minor parts Richard Bruce, Wallace Thurman, Edward G. Perry and Dorothy Embry. I am glad to see the younger artists getting this experience. Thurman, who is making a name for himself as a writer, is in the cast primarily to study the technique and mechanics of the stage so that he may some day write a play himself. Miss Embry is leader of the Harlem Sub-Debs and has staged amateur dramatic productions of her own. Perry and Bruce are artists. The only way we will produce our own playwrights who will at once be practial as well as accurate in dramatizing the better side of our life, is that they must go through the kind of apprenticeship which the small part plays like "Porgy" offer.

NEWS
DENVER, COLO.
OCT 18 1927

Negro Is Winning New Place on Stage, but Fails as Dramatist

THE prediction that Paul Robeson, Negro singer and actor, made when in Denver recently that members of his race are destined to take an ever-growing important place in the theater, seems borne out in a survey of New York productions—current and coming.

Yesterday at the New York Theater Guild—the shrine of American drama—the play "Porgy" opened. Its cast numbers 40 and nearly all, including the main characters, are Negroes.

Many Negro Casts Playing

The play, "Lulu Belle," now on tour, carries with it 40 Negroes. Variety, the theatrical publication, lists more than a dozen shows of various descriptions either with all-Negro casts or composed of many Negroes. Many of them are of the better class of productions.

In addition to this, Negro orchestras and performers are holding important places on the programs of many New York picture houses.

But while slowly but surely gaining a foothold in the theater in the present demand for "colored" atmosphere, the Negro is admittedly weak in the creative phase of drama. There are no outstanding Negro playwrights—in fact, very few Negro playwrights of any caliber.

Banks on O'Neill

Paul Robeson said he has received many plays by members of his race but has not yet found one acceptable or adaptable to his needs. He still pins his main hope on Eugene O'Neill for plays best suited for Negro acting. Robeson scored a sensational success in O'Neill's "Emperor Jones," and says that the dramatist is planning to write another play with Robeson especially in mind.

But in time, Robeson believes that the niterati of his race will take advantage of the great opportunity offered in dramas written by Negroes, to be acted by Negroes, and sincerely interpreting the problems and outlook for the Negro [illegible]

Chaplain of Old 8th Tells of Race Progress in France

Dr. William S. Braddan, major chaplain of the Eighth Illinois National guard, who served with this outfit which gained fame during the World war as the 370th infantry, was one of the delegates of our Race to the American league convention held at Paris this month. Dr. Braddan in a letter to The Chicago Defender tells of meeting many Americans who are making successes in the business and professional world, where they are recognized because of their ability. Dr. Braddan writes:

"As I neared the end of my six weeks tour of Europe it occurred to me to send certain observations for publication in your widely circulated paper.

"You should know with what avidity your paper is read by the little group of Americans of our Race who are quartered largely in the Montmartre district not because of any segregation, but because they are to a great extent employed in this particular section of the dream city of the world.

Meets Pioneer Musician

"Perhaps the pioneer of our Race group in Paris, in so far as music and entertainment are concerned, is Louis Mitchell, an ex-Chicago and New York man who traveled with Cole and Johnson for years. It was he who brought the first jazz band to Park's 11 years ago and who opened the first cabaret owned and operated by our Race and frequented by the elite and wealth of Europe and America. This same geneleman operates the only strictly American restaurant in Paris. His place—one of the show places in Paris—is thronged with English-speaking people from all over the world.

"At this time he has under contemplation the opening of two similar places—one in the heart of Paris, the Place de L'Opera, and another in the Latin quarter. He is ably assisted by his wife, Mrs. Antoinette Mitchell, daughter of Dr. Brooks of Washington, D. C.

"The many friends of Opal Cooper, who married the talented daughter of Prof. Lee of Chicago, will learn with pleasure of his wonderful success in the realm of song and music. His charming wife presides over a wonderful home, yet she never forgets Chicago, which she is planning to revisit with her husband next year.

"State St. is proud of Glover and Nettie Compton, whose doors at 35 Rue Victora Mars are always open and where a warm welcome is given everyone, especially Americans and Chicagoans. Here, also, lives Alberta Hunter, the sweet singer, and Lotta Tyler, niece of the lamented Bert Williams. Florence Mills and Josephine Baker are frequent visitors of 'Little Nettie,' as Mrs. Compton is called.

"Perhaps the man of our group who has been here longest is a messenger by the name of Mitchell at the American legation, who fought during the Spanish-American war and who has been out here since.

"Joe Boyd, an old-timer from State St., has lived here some 15 years, and having taken out his final papers, is now a full-fledged Frenchman.

"Chicken Smith of the Eighth Illinois National guard band, is plying his profession here with marked success.

"Johnnie Hudgins, the comedian, is the idol of Paris in his line. His charming wife is constantly with him.

"Bricktop Ada Smith, well loved by all, has her band at Berlin. With her are Smith and Florence (nee Clark).

Honored by Aviators

"Gene (Eugene) Dullard, one of the outstanding American boys who was refused by the American aviation corps during the war, joined the French flying force and has more decorations for bravery than the American officer who refused him ever will have.

"I am sending you copies of the order of Gen. Mangin of the 10th French Army, with which the Eighth was associated, which shows the appreciation of the French for the old Eighth. I succeeded in getting the copy from the original order. I have a fac-simile of this order that I am bringing home.

"There are but five of our group in attendance at the legion convention, which does not speak well for the legion as far as we are concerned. William J. Powell and myself are from Giles post, Chicago; a Mr. Neely from Wichita, Kan., and one other whose name I do not recall.

"We leave for home on Sept. 21."

Theatrical - 1927

Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK
GRAPHIC

JUN 15 1927

Charles Chaplin

THE Variety Artists' Federation of Great Britain has organized a movement to prevent future appearances in England of colored theatrical or variety troupes. The movement is not aimed at individual performers.

Knickerbocker Press
ALBANY, N. Y.

OCT 23 1927

NEGROS CROWDING AMERICAN STAGE; PUBLIC APPROVES

Broadway Will Feature Exclusive "Dark" Shows.

By HARVEY ANDERSON.

Special Correspondent of The Knickerbocker Press. Copyright, 1927.

NEW YORK, Oct. 22.—The American drama, if Broadway is to be taken as a criterion, will appear this year against a dark background. The season just opening puts on view two or three times more negroes than have ever before appeared in any single theatrical season.

This writer, scouting plays during the last week, found twenty-three theatres, exclusive of Harlem, where negro actors and vaudeville performers are included in the casts. Every branch of theatrical entertainment is represented by negroes, including straight drama, dancing, singing, burlesque, jubilee, choruses, comedy, tragedy, clowning, legerdemain and musical specialties. One show, a big Broadway success, has four negroes; another has sixty, and another has eighty.

One of last year's biggest dramatic hits is now on the road with thirty negroes in the cast. The straight drama in which negroes participate includes one ambitious Broadway play, another now on the road, and four or five plays in the little theatres of Greenwich Village.

Four new schools of dramatic art have been established in Harlem, negro capital of the world, during the summer. Booking agents of all kinds are besieged with negroes seeking engagements. Shakespeare and Ibsen are now in rehearsal, with all black casts, under the direction of a Harlem producing company, organized by negroes. This company, it is understood, will not go on tour but will be maintained as a stock company in Harlem.

At one of the largest moving picture houses in New York city, advertised as "the most famous moving picture theatre in the world," a negro conductor leads a white orchestra. Many picture houses which give vaudeville programs have negro performers.

Until Eugene O'Neill's "Emperor Jones" came out of Greenwich Village about five years ago, negroes in the theatre worked for the most part at their old established trade of singing and "hoofing." The success of "Emperor Jones" stimulated negro playwrights and actors, and since then more and more negroes have been finding a place both on the legitimate stage and in big musical productions.

The present wave of color in the entertainment world is attributed somewhat to the sensational success of a Harlem negress in Paris, who was erroneously reported as having been married to an Italian count.

This girl, appearing at the Folies Bergeres in Paris, started a vogue of negro performers, both in Paris and London. This stimulated imitators on this side and brought a deluge of dark show folks to the doors of booking offices, seeking night club, vaudeville and theatrical engagements. Their numbers were increased by recruits from all sections of America. Judging from appearances, quite a large proportion must have been successful, as the deepening color hue appears not only on the stage but in night clubs, cabarets and other places of entertainment. Many dancing teams are advertised as having been a "sensation" in Paris or London.

Several luxuriously appointed hotels have been fitted up in Harlem for the patronage of the new lite of the negro stage aristocracy. Negro newspapers are featuring the attainments of their race in dramatic art and a new and dazzling form of night life is developing around the darktown theatrical centers of Harlem. Harlem theatres are nearly all "dark," but not in the usually accepted sense of the term. Several of these theatres are supposed not to admit whites, but a few privileged Caucasians always may be seen at their performances.

Mark Eismann, booking agent and theatrical producer, who has specialized in placing negro attractions, said this would be by far the biggest year of his business.

"Every time some negro show scores a big success you find more and more of them crowding in," said Mr. Eismann. "It was that way after 'Emperor Jones' got over, and after that negro play 'In Abraham's Bosom' got the Pulitzer prize. While the play was a flop commercially, the award of the prize was a big sensation in the negro world. For weeks afterward we had visits from negroes who wanted to write or produce plays, or who wanted to get on the stage. It is part of our business to watch negro publications closely to keep a line on negro dramatic talent. There never has been a time in my experience when negroes were as busy or as successful as they are now. They have an idea that at last they are 'doing their stuff,' and they certainly are working hard."

Theatrical - Individual Troupes, etc.

Lexington, Ga. Echo

Lexington, Ga. Echo

NOV 4 1927

MANY NEGROES ON STAGE IN THE BROADWAY SHOWS

Are Featured in Twenty-Three Theatres Parts Ranging From Drama To Burlesque

The American drama, if Broadway is to be taken as a criterion, will appear this year against a dark background. The season just opening puts on view two or three times more negroes than have ever before appeared in any single theatrical season.

There are twenty-three theatres, exclusive of Harlem, where negro actors and vaudville performers are included in the casts. Every branch of the theatrical entertainment is represented by negroes, including the straight drama, dancing, singing, burlesque, jubilee, choruses, comedy, tragedy, clowning, legerdemain and musical specialties. One show, a big Broadway success, has forty negroes; another has sixty and another eighty.

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NEW YORK TIMES
DEC 3 1927

NEGRO TROUPE FOR LONDON

C. B. Cochran to Bring Singers for Film "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

Copyright, 1927, by The New York Times Company.
By Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, Dec. 2.—London has become so interested in American negroes since the appearance of Florence Mills and company here that C. B. Cochran has decided to bring another colored troupe to his London pavilion, Piccadilly Circus, and show the film "Uncle Tom's Cabin" there. Negroes will sing songs of before the war previous to showing of the film.

In the '50s the stage version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" was played simultaneously in five London theatres.

BATTY AND McCLAIN

Muriel Batty and McClain, working at the Central Theatre with Jessye's singers, in connection with Uncle Tom, doubled at the Capitol last week when Ruth Etter appeared.

ROCKY MT. NEWS
DENVER, COLO.
SEP 25 1927

ROBESON SINGS HERE ON FRIDAY

Negro Baritone Will Open Series for Highland Boys

The musical event of the week and an important one in that it officially opens the season and brings to Denver a great artist, will be the concert at the Auditorium Friday evening. Paul Robeson, Negro baritone, and Lawrence Brown, tenor and accompanist, will be heard as the initial attraction of the Highlander Boys series.

Robeson has achiever international fame not only as a singer of great power but as an actor. Altogether a different type than Roland Hayes, they cannot be compared, but his type of work is just as beautiful and interesting as that of the Negro tenor. Lawrence Brown is a composer of note as well as a singer, and also has achieved a fame that has spanned the ocean. Denver will be their only concert this year, the engagements in Europe having been made more impossible.

The singer's sailing has been postponed two weeks so that he may come to Denver to oblige the Highlander Boys.

The following is the program in detail:

SPIRITUALS I
"Wade in de Water"..Arr. by Edward Boatner
"Go Down Moses"...Arr. by H. T. Burleigh
"Weepin' Mary".....Arr. by H. T. Burleigh
"Ezekial Saw de Wheel".....
Arr. by Lawrence Brown
FOLK SONGS II
"Water Boy".....Arr. by Avery Robinson
"Lil Gal"...Composed by Rosamond Johnson
"Sometimes I Fell Like a Motherless Child"
Arr. by Lawrence Brown
"Lil" David".....Arr. by Lawrence Brown
SPIRITUALS III
"On Ma Journey"..Arr. by Edward Boatner
"Bye and Bye".....Arr. by H. T. Burleigh
"Deep River".....Arr. by H. T. Burleigh
"Every Time I Feel de Spirit".....
Arr. by Lawrence Brown
SPIRITUALS IV
"Were You There?"..Arr. by H. T. Burleigh
"I Got a Home in-a-dat Rock".....
Arr. by Lawrence Brown
"Nobody Knows de Trouble I See".....
Arr. by Lawrence Brown
"Witness".....Arr. by Lawrence Brown

Sixty Race Singers In Hammerstein's Play "Golden Dawn"

Great Chorus to Feature Big Production Scenes Laid in Jungles

By Alice Dunbar Nelson

NEW YORK CITY, Oct. 6.—Arthur Hammerstein is offering this year one of the most lavishly beautiful, splendidly staged, magnificent choralled productions of recent years. It has not reached Broadway yet, at this writing. It is still being whipped into shape in the hinterland, and dog-towns. At its production in Wilmington, Dela., the first performance, which was twenty-four hours overdue, lasted four hours. It will need cutting and pruning. It is to be hoped that the cutting will not include the choruses—they are far too splendid not to be given to Broadway in their entirety.

Mr. Hammerstein has included about sixty Negro singers in his cast, women and men with wonderfully well-blended voices. Choral effects reminding one of the built up and sustained effects of the second act of "Deep River" without its depression. The scene is in German East Africa, in the jungles. The heroine, Louise Hunter from the Metropolitan Opera, a white girl, stolen in infancy and reared as a girl of the jungles, believes she is a Negro, and becomes a priestess. There is a Harlem Negro, who has returned to Africa and "gone native," but retains his superiority over the "bush-niggers." I wish Paul Robeson had that role. His motif song, "When I Crack My Whip" has all the bombast of the Toreador Song, but Robert Chisholm is only a white man made up brown, after all. Said the musical critic, "If there were no other reason for seeing the show, the Negro chorus would be sufficient. They recreate the jungle atmosphere with admirable precision in the wild abandon of their songs and dances.

What with Rang Tang, Africana, and Golden Dawn, it seems as if we are in for a "Back to Africa" movement in music and drama. Settings by Josef Urban, an artist to do costume research, hand-woven textiles, African wigs and masks, African drums and weapons, a wealth of study on Africa and all presented with a magnificent disregard of expense. Africa glorified—the atmosphere untouched by the accident. The white man has discovered the artistic possibilities of Africa, as he has discovered its commercial possibilities, and he intends to exploit them to the fullest.

As Shep Keyes, the expatriate Harlemite, turned slave driver and bully, says bitterly, "That's the way with a white man, if he sees we've got something worth while, he takes it from us, gets it all, every bit, squeezes us dry, and then all we get for what he takes is a kick and a curse."

Broadway is due a thrill from that Negro chorus, those jungle dances, that insight into the purity of thought of the tribal religion.

ZIEGFELD AND BELASCO LAUD OUR SHOW GIRLS

By WILLIAM F. McDERMOTT

These are triumphant times for the Negro in our theaters. Extreme brunet was never before so fashionable [illegible] of the footlights.

What is reported to be the most meritorious ensemble acting now visible in New York is supplied by a Negro cast presenting a play of life in the black belt called "Porgy." This production is under the austere direction of the Theatre Guild, sponsors of the recently seen and excellently done "Pygmalion."

Belasco's "Lulu Belle," also a late visitor in these parts, numbered many Negroes in its company and now comes Ziegfeld with "Show Boat" giving us a girl show in which the majority of the beauties, the livliest of the dancers and the most stirring of the singers are African.

Thus our blackamoor brethren are recognized with a respectful flourish by the dean of American producers, by the foremost of repertory companies, by the most celebrated of the girl show impresarios.

It was only a few short years ago that a famous American actress refused to act in Eugene O'Neill's fine "All God's Chillun Got Wings," because the play demanded the use of Negroes in the cast.

And it wasn't so very long since beloved Bert Williams hesitated to walk down the street with a critic who wasn't fit to shine his tan shoes because he thought the critic might be embarrassed by showing himself to be the friend of a gentleman and an artist who happened to be born a Negro.

Our sable fellow citizens are likely to make excellent use of their new opportunities in the theater. They have the true mimetic sense. Imitation comes to them naturally. They have a rich and distinctive humor.

Vibrant voices, voices attuned for tragedy, for stirring emotion are more common among [illegible] than among Caucasians.

Rhythym is born in them. I never saw a group of Negro steppers who didn't get a distinctive joyous buoyancy into their dancing. That particular quality—and everybody senses it—cannot be duplicated by whites.

Acting of any sort requires a certain emotional richness, a quick sensitiveness to impressions. I imagine that people with these qualities are more numerous among Negroes than among the blonds, Nordic or other.

It would be pleasant sometime to see an English classic—say Shakespeare's "Hamlet"—performed by a cast of trained Negro actors. Certainly such a performance would be more genuinely musical than any representation of Shakespeare you or I have ever seen and Shakespeare is nothing if not musical.

BLADE
TOLEDO, O.
DEC 29 1927

The Passing

AFTER a successful road career of more than forty years the Al G. Fields minstrel show has disbanded. The management confesses frankly that poor patronage is the reason for quitting.

The Negro minstrel show originated in the United States early in the Nineteenth century. There was a lot of slapstick stuff in the performances, but wit and art and real talent in interlude, dialogue and dancing maintained it in public favor long after the grotesquely blackened, becuffed and becollared end men and interlocutors had become almost too familiar figures.

For more than one hundred years the Negro minstrel show held an important place among the offerings for public entertainment. In these new days of jazz and radio and sexy shows and ardent moving pictures, the ever quickening throb of tambourine, and bones and banjo arouses no responsive thrill and when the last minstrel show quits, a distinctively American institution will pass out.

Theatrical - 1927
Individual Troupes, etc.

Roland Hayes' Influence Abroad Greater Than Florence Mills'

J. A. Rogers Tells Of Americans In Paris Dance Halls And Theatres

PARIS—Perhaps the two peoples who have migrated least are the Eskimo and the American Negro. And for very good reasons.

The first because his climate is best a cold one; the second, because he lives in an economic environment, which though not ideal, is perhaps more advantageous than that of any other land. America for over two centuries has been the Mecca of the job-seeker the world over.

Trace other than superficially the voluntary movement of any mass of humanity— Pilgrim Fathers, Huguenots, Jews, Irish, Bantu,— and it will be found to be due first of all to economic motives just as that of our nomadic ancestors who had to keep on the move, not as thatETAOIN on the move, not so much because they wanted to but because they were compelled to follow the animals on which they lived.

God Of Economic Betterment

Politicians and other pay-triots tell us that the Pilgrim Fathers came to America because they sought freedom to worship their God. That is true, because the God they sought most was economic betterment. Their opponents, Charles I and his party held the economic power, and in a new land the Pilgrims hoped to be able to better their condition. To this end the ancestors of many of our leading American families, even sold themselves into slavery in the colonies.

Independence

As the Declaration of Independence implies the majority of human beings will tolerate the loss of a part, or even the major part of their rights provided their daily bread is forthcoming. Most of us are like the bird in a cage who will sing as long as he is fed and watered. Very, very few are like the bird of the forest whose dominant passion is freedom, pure and simple.

And so the American Negro, North or South, by remaining at home in spite of conditions, which at this distance, seem incredible, is only do- do leave, nearly all return to become ing the human thing. The few, who bigger boosters of their native land than ever.

Prejudice Rare

In Europe, the one and only white man's country, color prejudice is as rare as it is plentiful in Georgia or Florida. But here another problem faces the Negro, or any other immigrant for that matter—a problem that is much sharper—the job. The Negro soon finds that Europe with its surplus of labor, low wages and keener struggle for existence is no place for him.

Europe Poor

Some of the most bitter and disappointed human beings I have ever met are Negroes who have come to England or France, thinking that because of the absence of color prejudice, they would be able also to get the economic essentials. Such have found that instead of getting that almost every hand seemed stretched to get or to take what they have. For Europeans, poorer than Americans, are, as a rule, much keener after money.

The American has been much maligned in this. It is not he, but the European who is the money-chaser. Already with money, he is seeking social recognition. European immigrants have a tendency to accumulate money faster than native Americans.

Dancers And Musicians

Perhaps only the Negroes who have been able to gain an economic footing in Europe are the dancers and musicians. These find themselves in a field all their own—a field in which their color is all their favor. The result is that the majority of colored Americans to be found abroad are musicians. The jazz era certainly created a vogue for the black musician and performer in Europe.

Jo Baker

Next to the Negro soldier, the Negro musician has done most to bring the colored American to the notice of the European. There is also the Negro prize-fighter but his conduct has not always been above reproach. In Paris the Revue Negre, out of which came Josephine Baker created added interest in the Negro, as at the present time Florence Mills is doing with her "Blackbirds" in London.

Roland Hayes

But without any desire to disparage it must be noted that the interest so created is not an enchancing one.. It is highly popular but it does not add prestige. Their art, if it can be so called is evanescent. One is delighted by their dancing or singing but on leaving the theatre one straightway forgets. Match this up with the interest created by a great artist like Roland Hayes.

The colored American needs to cultivate more missionaries like Hayes or the late Edmund Jenkins and send them higther. And as to the Negro actor if he is forced into low comedy in America, here in Europe perhaps his only limit will lbe his ability. What Ira Aldridge did can be done again. At a time when slavery was at its worst in America Aldridge was playing Othello, he being the only Negro in the company.

Benglia

In France French Negroes play serious parts with white actors and actresses. At the Folies-Bergere I saw the great Negro actor, Benglia playing the role of Faust's Mephistopheles, his Marguerite being a white woman.

Earl Granstaff

Many of the musicians above have played before crowned heads, and other leaders of European society. At Marseilles I met Earl Granstaff who had just landed a year's contract with one of the leading cabarets there. Mr. Grandstaff has visited most of the countries of Europe, and has played before the King and Queen of Spain, the late King of Roumania the Prince of Wales, and Kemal Plasha at Constantinople where he also entertained Admiral Bristol and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson. In Vienna he played in an opera in which he was the only colored person.

He is also the composer of several songs, which made a considerable hit. Mr. Grandstaff is from New York City, and is a member of Hiram Lodge and Ascension Commandery. He tells me by the way that he saw Negroes occupying more and higher positions in Constantinople than in any other place he has been.

New Yorker

Rudolph Dunbar, another New Yorker, is having phenomenal success, and has played before the King of Spain. He is a cornetist and tells me that he is having a golden instrument made. When last I heard of him he was playing in London.

Josephine Baker is so well-known that it will not be necessary to mention her except to say that she has become author and that her "Memoirs" are being extensively advertised now at leading book-stores.

It would be impossible to mention all the musicians and performers in Paris at the present time but among those that may be mentioned are W. A. Johnson of the Johnson Trio and Quartette of 63 rue Nemours, whose jazz band and orchestra is a favorite at society functions at the Ritz and other fashionable places; Henry G. Walton, trumpeter of the International Five—the others being Opal Cooper, Harvey White, Palmer Jones, Nelson Kinkead, and Roscoe Burnett, all of whom are playing at Montmartre, E. E. Thompson, former bandmaster of the Buffaloes, plays at the Folies-Bergere, at which are also Billy Taylor, Bert Marshall, and Gay Martin. A. Peters plays at Pigalle's Restaurant in Montmartre.

Harry Fleming

Among the dancers are Harry Fleming of Philadelphia, who is a hit at the Moulin Rouge, and "Snowball" a youngster, who is the delight of audiences at the Casino de Paris.

Troupe of 80

At the Jardin d'Acclimatation in the Bois de Boulogne is the Garland troupe of 80 Negroes, a good many of whom are Americans. All are in a Negro village, which is supposed to represent a plantation scene in the South. They sing and dance, especially the Charleston, which is still a favorite in the Paris dance-halls. These entertainers have been receiving considerable publicity in the daily press and deserve it. One needs not be surprised if at the end of the season someo f them are offered contracts by leading music-halls. Joe Boyd is conductor.

Al Brown

While in the Garden I met Al Brown the boxer, who has since returned to New York. Mr. Brown enjoys a splendid reputation, besides he has won all but one of the eight fights in which he engaged, and that was a draw with Seeley, champion of Europe.

Music Students

Next in number to the entertainers are music students in the various conservatories or under private teachers. One of these I have met is Miss Katherine Yarborough of New York City. It was stated in our prominent papers that Miss Yarborough is in Paris Opera, a statement she is anxious to deny. However the paper in question doesn't appear to be so far wrong for if one hears her sing one wonders why she isn't in Opera. Miss Yarborough is very ambitious and says she intends to take two years more of study under her private teacher, who is one of a year or so in France, and then a year or so in Italy. She recently gave a recital at Rheims.

Other Students

Among other students are Andrew Rosemond, formerly of the Martin Music School of New York, who is studying violin; Louisa Jones, formerly of the New York Conservatory and who has also studied in Australia. Flora Conway of Philadelphia who is studying piano; Roland Smith of Akron O., Henry Georges Walton and Wm. Lawrence, former accompanist of Roland Hayes.

(To Be Continued)

9-10-27

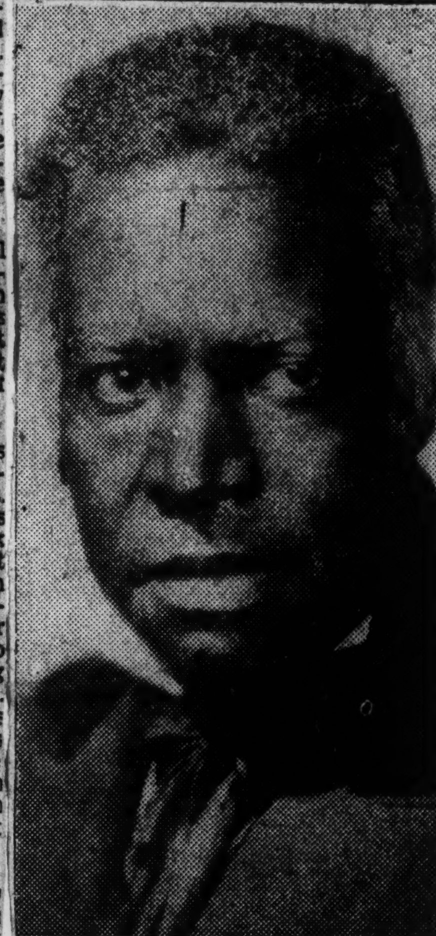
"LULU BELLE" MAY OPEN IN CHICAGO

Harlem Drama Expected To Begin Season In Early Part Of September

CHICAGO. —David Belasco's "Lulu Belle", the play of Harlem life which played to New York audiences last season, will probably open the season here in the early part of September at the Blackstone or La Salle Theatre, according to reports in theatrical circles.

The play, which portrayed a dark and view of the so-called lower classes and was bitterly assailed as was Van Vechten's "Nigger Heaven" had a cast of practically 125 actors only two of which were white. It is reported that Lenore Ulric, white feminine lead, will not appear in the cast this season. Evelyn Preer, who played one of the principal roles, is now in the cast of "Rang Tang", with Miller and Lyles at the Royale, New York.

James Lowe In



JAMES B. LOWE

Among the visitors of the past week were Jimmy Smith, interested in Racial Activities in the motion picture business on the west coast, along with the producing line, and James B. Lowe, whose portrayal of the titular role of Uncle Tom in Universal's great production of Uncle Tom's Cabin, is said to be far and anything ever done by one of "our group" for screening. Lowe is credited with being the best character artist of the race and his engagements for the future are many, his services being bid for by some of the biggest producers, following his great work in the $2,000,000 production above mentioned.

The pair are headed for New York City, and according to Jimmy Smith, they will make a three or four months visit to Europe before heading for their home in Hollywood. Lowe, who is also a wonderful artist on the speaking stage, may be cast for an important part in the coming big production, "Deep River." He will visit his wife and daughter who are residing in New Jersey, before sailing.

Florence Mills Again Gives Interview to a Leading European Publication

Sends Clippings to Amsterdam News to Prove Tha She Is Taking Advantage of Every Opportunity to Place Negroes in Favorable Light

On more than one occasion it has fallen upon the shoulders of Miss Florence Mills to occupy personal space in the European newspapers because of the wonderful success she has scored in the revue called "Blackbirds." How well Miss Mills represents Negroes in Europe has been from time to time shown in the Amsterdam News, the only publication in this country to which she personally sends information of her work.

Recently "C. M.," writing in the Manchester Evening Citizen, after an interview with the lovable little star, had the following to say:

To snatch five minutes with Florence Mills during the performance of "Blackbirds" is something of a feat. When she's not actually on the stage, she's either coming off or going on. I maanged, however, to have a five-minute chat in the wings, not an ideal place for a talk, with a jazz orchestra going full steam ahead and the stage hands rushing about.

How does Miss Mills strike one off the stage? Like all real comedians or comediennes, she has that touch of wistfulness, that hint of tears behind all the laughter which is the stamp of real comedy. In spite of the fact that she is just a little bit tired—she has not had a night off for five years—there is tremendous energy in her slight frame.

The Color Bar.

It seemed inevitable that we should talk about the Negro attitude to life and the white man's attitude to the Negro. "We have been very well treated in this country," she said. "In fact, people could not have been kinder. There is a color bar I know, but it is not so strong as it was. You see, apart from his own people, a Negro's life is difficult. We have some brilliant men in America—lawyers, doctors and so on—yes their color stands in their way. I have a feeling that our own little efforts in 'Blackbirds' is doing something to break down the color prejudice, and that fact helps us tremendously in our work.

No Bitterness.

"Another thing, although the colored people have always been dominated by the white, there is no bitterness in the Negro's heart, no resentment. I am, of course, speaking of Negroes as a whole. There is a something in us, I cannot tell you what it is, but it is a happiness that always seems to triumph

this company, for example. I have known some of my fellow players to go on feeling very sad and in the depths of misery, yet by calling up this reserve force, and by singing and dancing, they think it. Our show is essentially the same every night, yet it is different every night. This reserve force of happiness is always breaking out in unexpected places, and consequently our work does not seem like work, but is more like having a good time.

"This mysterious quality in the Negro make-up has attracted a number of eminent psychologists, who are studying the question just now."

In America.

"Do you find the color bar in America still as strict?" I asked.

"No, it isn't, but in America I keep mostly to my own people. You see, we live our own life there, and find our own amusements, in our own theatres, and so on. We have, as you know, some fine actors, Paul Robeson, who acted in London recently, Gilpin, and others."

"Is there a Negro drama?"

"No, there is no actual Negro drama, in the sense that there is Negro music, but the American dramatist, Eugene O'Neill, for one, is beginning to take the Negro seriously and has treated various aspects of Negro life recently."

A burst of applause drowned our talk. "This is a wonderful audience," said Miss Mills, "appreciative and understanding. Naturally, I like such an audience, and yet, I like a stolid one, too. When I am faced with a stolid audience I know that I must make them my friends, and I—and the others—are on my mettle. We feel that it is something worth fighting for. There is, too—"

But what "there is, too," I shall never know, for there she was on the stage. Seconds are precious

COLORED SHOWS AGAIN HIT FOOTLIGHTS OF BROADWAY

By ALBERT ANDERSON

For the Associated Negro Press

New York, N. Y., July 28—With Miller and Lyles in their gorgeous new "Rang Tang," and Ethel Waters starring in "Africana" opening the same week on Broadway, while Clarence Williams' revue "Bottom Lands" also downtown, goes into its fourth week, one might opine that the season for colored shows is already in full swing, and if the full houses which have been greeting them every night, July nights at that, are any criterion, they are in for a successful stay. The critics who have been predicting that colored shows could not longer make it on Broadway, and the white women's clubs which have been passing resolutions urging the prohibition of these shows, where their husbands were getting too "free and easy view of brownskin pulchitrude," are not making much headway.

Miller Threatens

Flournoy Miller has been threatening for some years to do this thing which he has finally come close to accomplishing—to produce a perfect Negro musical comedy."

In "Rang Tang" which is playing at the Royal Theatre, 45th and Broadway, from the moment Ford Dabney lifts his baton as the curtain rises until the final ensemble, there's not a draggy moment. The action is fast. The book is snappy. The plot unwraps a tale of two colored barbers who forced by their justifiable unpopularity to flee "Jim Town" steal an aeroplane and land in an idealized Africa which rivals the Arabian Nights, the kind of an Africa most Negroes have always dreamed about; and Miller and Lyles with a comedy Negroid but artistically clever and up to the minute spend enough time on the stage to dominate the evening.

There's a capable supporting company, Evelyn Preer, the prima donna makes one wish that coupled with the wonderful experience she has had another her undoubted talent, she could call back that face and form of her adolescent days ten or fifteen years ago. Such a combination would be hard to beat. Zardee Jackson who after several years as a subrette at last has a big chance, entirely justifies it. Others who attract are May Barnes and Lavinia Mack, terpsichorean due and Byron Jones who in his dancing is superb. Charles Davis and Jerry Mills have worked wonders with the chorus which is large, hot looking, and beautifully customed, although I would like to have seen what Louis Douglas would have done with such an aggregation to work with.

Better Than Shuffle Along"

One wishes for more critical observances to give, but the show which to me seems better than "Shuffle Along," a common standard of measurement, justifies but few. Outstanding single voices are missing except in the case of Josephine Hall, former Chicagoan, who plays the role of Queen of Sheba and whose "Come to Africa" after Miller and Lyles fall into the ocean off its shores is well done.

Ford Dabney has provided some tuneful music, which he directs with a spirit that recalls, particularly in the unique solo for the banjo, the family bent as exemplified in Wendell Phillips Dabney, his cousin. Joe Will is with a beautiful bass voice sang some of it with the mass chorus that rivals the Student Prince. The book is by Kay Gynt, the lyrics by Jo Trent, while Flournoy Miller staged the entire production.

At Daly's 63rd Street Theatre, "Africana," rather loosely woven bit of entertainment, with a number of vaudeville acts and reconstructed stage sketches serves Miss Ethel Waters as a starring vehicle. She as usual is a delightfully suave artist, putting over her songs in a fashion that instantly captivates her audiences in the intimate little theatre she is using. For the past several years we have been complaining that white people were stealing the dances our folk originated, refining them and coining the cash and glory resultant... We are catching up and dancing in "Africana" proves it. Louis Douglas has performed miracles with a perfectly matched brown chorus—the best I've seen.

Glenn and Jenkins in the street sweeping scene score of course. Snow Fisher and Baby and Bobbie Goins are good while Paul Bass not only uses his sweet tenor voice, but proves to be quite an actor. There are no song hits. In "Rang Tang" "Jungle Rose" and Rang Tang score are some, and in "Africana," Miss Waters sings "Weary Feet" and "Smile". Chiefly she uses her old songs.

Clarence William's "Bottom Lands," to long life, the season is on. May first week rather poorly, I hear, but each week has shown an improvement. So with these three shows to long life, the season is off. May good luck and prosperity hover over

Colored Stars Selected For Ince Production

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., July 14.— will be released soon, and the high- With his latest cinema effort, "Out Sea Love," having a dark-skinned background, Ralph Ince, after interviewing the best of the colored motion picture talent available, has selected Gertrude Howard, Everette Brown and Nathan Curry for parts.

Gertrude Howard is the Aunt Chloe of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which

Everette Brown and Nathan Curry are with the company on location in Santa Anna Canyon.

In addition to the above named, some 20 more actresses and actors stand out prominently in the finished product.

Theatrical - 1927

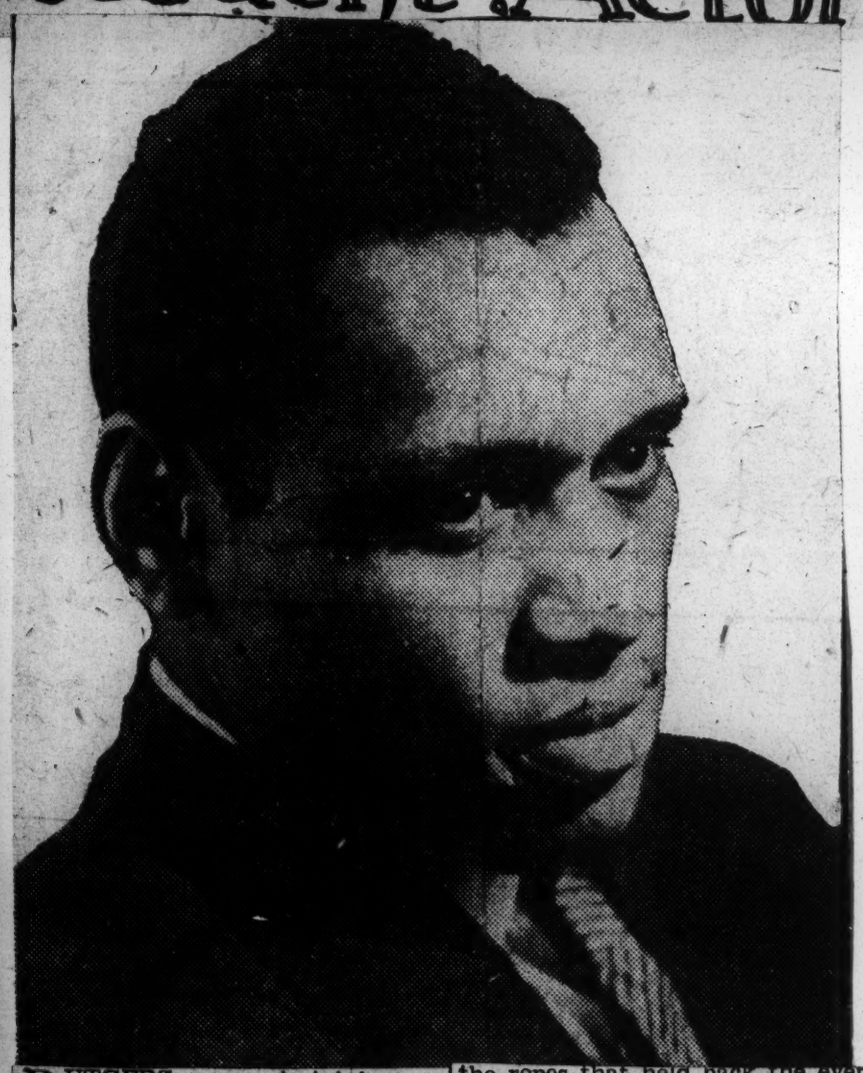
Individual Troupes, etc.

ROCKY MT. NEWS
DENVER, COLO.
SEP 25 1927

Singer, Athlete, Lawyer-Paul Robeson

"IT'S ALL RIGHT; YOU STAY BACK THERE I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOUR BOY"

-Student Actor



RUTGERS was entertaining an ancient rival on the football field. The yelling, shouting, hysterical crowd had risen to its feet as two lines of taut men charged, and eyes strained to see the ball that lay at the bottom of a writhing, squirming mass of humanity.

Then as suddenly as the men had charged, the racket ceased; there was a hush as the pile of flesh and bones disentangled and one form lay quiet between the chalked lines that mark a collegiate field of battle.

The sustained buzz of questions as fan asked fan who was hurt increased while Rutgers men formed about the prostrate body and started "pumping" arms and legs.

A few seconds and from under the ropes that held back the ever-present crowd of sideline fans darted a tall, skinny, ministerial old Negro. He advanced toward the crowd of Rutgers players.

As he advanced, the injured player, a young Negro giant, jumped to his feet, saw the older man coming across the field, then as the Rutgers stands cheered with relief, waved back the other with:

"I'll Care for Boy," Cries Young Giant

"Never mind. Go on back. I'll take care of your boy."

The old man was the Rev. William Robeson, of pure black stock, who had escaped from slavery when 15 and put himself thru Lincoln university to become first a Presbyterian and later a Methodist minister.

The boy was Paul Robeson, son of his father, later to become a leader of his race as an actor and as a concert singer.

The story is told by Leslie Deal of the Denver Y. M. C. A., in describing his experiences with the young athlete who is to appear here in concert Sept. 30.

Deal, in "Y" work at Newark, N. J., during Robeson's Rutgers days, often called upon him to entertain the Newark boys by singing, playing or by talking to them. His athletic prowess won their attention and his personality held it. He loved his Y. M. C. A. work.

"Play hard and work hard," was Robeson's message for the boys.

He followed that advice. Often, Deal said, he lamented that he couldn't just give a wee bit more effort (he always gave his best) which might have made another first down for his team, possibly another score.

Giant Wins Place In Camp's Team

His play won him a place on Walter Camp's all-American football team as end. He was among the greatest of defensive ends. His play won him letters in football four years, baseball two years, basketball three years and track one year.

His work at school won the coveted Phi Beta Kappa key, which recalls the story told of the day when, as a freshman, he proudly presented his report card to his father.

It showed seven As and one B.

The father looked it over carefully and asked:

"Why the B?"

Graduating with honors from Rutgers, he turned to law and studied at Columbia. His father, tho, had wanted him to be a minister.

It was during Robeson's Columbia days that the writer first saw him in action and heard that marvelous bass-baritone voice which later was to be his career.

Robeson in 1921 became a member of an Ohio professional football team, attending lectures in New York during the week and reaching the scene of the next scheduled football game Sunday. He paid a good part of his expenses with football during his professional playing experience.

As a professional Paul played against men like Henry of W. and J., West of Colgate, Youngstrom of Dartmouth, Usher of Syracuse, Griggs of Texas, Oliphant of the Army, Hughit of Michigan, Anderson of Colgate, Harley and Stinchcomb of Ohio State, Jim Thorpe and Pete Calac of Carlisle, Joe Guyon of Georgia Tech, Horsey Edwards of Notre Dame. Robeson played as an All-America against these men of All-America caliber.

Defensive Work Halts Stars of Opposition

One game at Buffalo comes to mind. Oliphant and Anderson both were in the Buffalo backfield and Luke Urban, now a big league catcher, was on one end with Bob Nash, also a Rutgers man, on the opposite wing.

Time and again Oliphant and Anderson failed to make their yardage, due almost entirely to the great defensive work of the 6 foot 4 Negro. The game ended a scoreless tie.

A few weeks later the same teams met. Robeson was out of the game with an injury. Oliphant and Anderson ran wild on the end that was Robeson's and Buffalo won.

In a game against the famous Canton Bulldogs led by Guy Chamberlain of Nebraska and the famous Indian trio, Thorpe, Calac and Guyon, Robeson was largely responsible for an Akron victory by stopping Edwards, Notre Dame tackle, who had been making great holes thru the line.

On the professional team with Robeson were West Virginian univesrity players of Bull Rodgers' famous team. They had been among those who threatened not to play Rutgers if Rutgers left its famous 225-pound Negro star in the game.

As a teammate, Robeson won their respect.

Then at the end of the season the football team was banqueted by its followers.

The feature of the impromptu entertainment came when Robeson, urged on by Fritz Pollard, happy-go-lucky kinky-haired 145-pound Brown halfback, consented to sing.

And how he did sing; nothing but Southern songs and spirituals, but music that gripped your heartstrings.

Robeson's Voice Wins Praise of Critics.

He had never seen a Georgia road gang, but he sang "Water Boy" with the very spirit and accent of the Negro laborer. Then——

I got a home in-a-dat rock,
Don't you see?

The critics later talked of Robeson's voice. They said:

"It has organ notes.

"It is a voice in which deep bells ring.

"It is like the wind in the tree tops.

"It has restraint and power which hold thunder behind each song.

"It compasses some universal tragedy of the spirit."

Their appreciation was no more than that of a surprised gang of football fans who heard those same spirituals at the close of a happy, rollicking football celebration.

He sang no classical songs that night. He sings no opera today.

He has told reporters he doesn't aspire to sing opera except in the bathtub.

Yet, critics declare, the recognition that is Roland Hays' could be had by Robeson should he want to imitate Hays, or any of the great concert singers of the white race.

"I am not imitating anyone," Paul explains. "I am not trying to prove I can do what the white man does. People like American Negro music. I sing the songs without distorting them. I do not jazz them. I put my best effort in my every selection. The farther I go, the better it will be for my race."

And there's the explanation for Robeson abandoning a law career, a career on the stage where he was recognized by critics as among the best, for his singing. He feels he can do more for his people.

Spirituals Represent Soul of People

"I am not ashamed of the spirituals. They represent the soul of my people. White and colored people react alike to songs. Differences are forgotten, and prejudices vanish when mixed audiences meet at the concerts. Humanity is helped and lifted to higher levels."

Robeson's stage career has been mentioned. He first attracted notice in 1924 with the Provincetown players, presenting Eugene O'Neill's "All God's Chilluns Got Wings."

At the time the papers were filled with sensational stories inspired by the fact that the play called for a white girl to kiss the hand of the Negro star.

His first part was in "Voodoo," a mediocre Negro play. And he was one of "The Four Kings of Harmony" in "Shuffle Along."

When he became Brutus Jones, the emperor in "The Emperor

Jones," another Eugene O'Neill success, his work was contrasted with that of the famous Gilpin who created the part. Gilpin gave the "wickeder performance, but not the more intelligent," George Jean Nathan and other critics declared.

And here's what some of his musical critics say of his work.

The musical expert of the New York Times said April 20, 1925:

"An unusually interesting program of Negro music was given by the baritone Paul Robeson and his associate, Lawrence Brown, before a large and enthusiastic audience. Mr. Robeson is a singer of genuine power. His Negro spirituals have the ring of the revivalist, they hold in them a world of religious experience; it is a cry from the depths, this universal humanism that touches the heart. Sung by one man, they voiced the sorrows and hopes of a peop'e."

Shy But Dignified Negro Gentleman

The reviewer in the Kansas City Times passed the following judgment two years later:

"A shy but dignified Negro gentleman sang last night in Grand Avenue Temple before an enthusiastic audience that filled the auditorium, and contained most of the intelligent musicians of Kansas City. For Robeson's name has, like the pillar of fire he occasionally sings about, gone on before him. Most primitive things gain when presented by an artist of real cultivation, and Robeson is that. He simply sings. His voice has a depth and capacity for expressing emotion comparable with that of Chaliapin in his better days. His own fine reserve is the nicest sort of background for it. Few singers have a comparable sense of climax, and no singer in this reviewer's experience has had such a gift for inflecting the tonality as well as the theme—if there is such a term. Robeson gave at times the gripping sensation of floating about the pitch, and when he finally alighted there was the sensation of having had a brief and breathless journey into quite a new sphere. Elena Gerhardt thus willfully tampers with the pitch, but with none of the naturalness nor exciting emotional result that attends Robeson's."

The young Negro of whom all this is written, is about 28 years old. He was born in Princeton, N. J. His father, as mentioned before, was a minister, his mother a school teacher.

And on graduation from law school, Paul married Eslanda Goode, a brilliant colored girl of Spanish extraction, a chemist by training who gave up a responsible position with a Presbyterian hospital to become her husband's manager.

Together they plan many things that Paul may do for his people, ever avoiding the boast of what he has done. He never boasts, he is always natural, just himself.

That is part of the secret of his ability as a Negro to hold his own among both colored people and white people—a blend of tact, a highly sensitive intuition of the outer world, with the power to accept personal or racial limitations in a spirit of benignant grace and finality.

$50 A Week Club Alabam Girl Is Now Getting "$150 Per" In Paris

RUTH WALKER

Beautiful New Yorker who was formerly a chorine at the Club Alabam, Broadway and 44th street, at $35 per week, now earning $150 a week in a Paris night club, according to reports reaching Harlem theatrical circles. Miss Walker sailed for Paris in August. She is a native New Yorker, although many of her admirers think she is a Creole from New Orleans. She is famous for her "snake dance."

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Birmingham, Ala., Age-Herald
FEB 8 1927

CITY BANS SHOW FOR WHITES IN NEGRO THEATER

President Jones Says Application Was Turned Down Flatly

Any efforts of negro theater managers to secure sanction of shows in negro theaters for white people have been and will be futile, for the city commission has refused to grant any such request and will continue to do so, with or without the recommendation of any body or group of people," President J. M. Jones, of the city commission, said Monday night following a report that the Birmingham Pastor's union had received a petition from a negro theater manager, said to have been passed on from the commission for the pastor's approval.

President Jones' statement was made after a published report of the monthly meeting of the Birmingham Pastor's union which stated that the petition came from the city commission, and the ministers gave neither their approval or disapproval, passing it to the social service committee for investigation and report at the next meeting.

"The theater manager in question has been trying for the past several months to obtain permission to hold shows for white persons in his place, and his petition has been refused every time," President Jones added, "and with the commission's decision already given on the matter, which is a question to be decided solely by the body, there is absolutely no hope for the passage of any such grants or petitions.

"We feel that it is our duty to take such matters under advisement, and have done so, the incident is closed," Mr. Jones ended.

The petition which aroused the commission, was presented at the regular monthly meeting of the pastor's union, which met in the First Methodist church Monday. Dr. Charles Clingman, president of the organization, who presided, declared that little significance had been paid the matter when it was brought up and the matter quickly gave way to the regular business, the ministers declaring that theatrical productions did not concern them, and they did not feel warranted to place their approval on the matter.

Dr. C. B. Glenn, superintendent of city schools, was the chief speaker at the meeting Monday, speaking on character building in public schools.

MUSICAL COMEDIES TO INVADE B'WAY

Miller And Lyles, Sissle And Blake Among The Showmen Atemtpting "White Way."

TO TRY REVIVAL OF "DARKTOWN FOLLIES"

Shows Plan Openings In Washington To Rub Off Rough Spots.

Of four new shows being groomed for Broadway openings, all are musical comedies of the minstrel type.

The new shows are planned by Miller and Lyles of "Running Wild" fame, Sissle and Blake, Tim Moore and Freddie Johnson, and Evon Robinson, wife of the late John Leubrie Hill, and starred principal of the old "Darktown Follies." Irvin C. Miller began some plans for a Broadway show from his present companies several months ago, but has made no formal announcement recently.

Miller and Lyles are said to be in rehearsal of their show, which will be called "In Jungle Land." The Sissle and Blake musical comedy, which will begin rehearsals soon, is of the same type. The two companies are expected to have their premiers in Washington preparatory to attempting the "white way."

Tim Moore, featured comedian with the "Southland" Revue, has completed the book of his musical comedy entitled "Bronze Buddies," and is breaking in some of the skits this week for the purpose of selecting suitable characters for the opening. The music score is by Freddie Johnson, who wrote "Jack Sambo."

"Bronze Buddies" will have a cast of 40 persons and will feature the best performers obtainable, according to a statement by Moore. Moore and Johnson will carry the comedy. The chorus is to be selected from the present personnel of the "Southland" Revue and other outside talent.

The Evon Robinson vehicle will be a revival of "Darktown Follies," which ran successful seasons 1915 and 1920-21. The "Follies" is expected to go into rehearsal next May 23. "Dink" Stewart, now a member of Mrs. Marcus Garvey's "Hey!, Hey!," is to head the comedy. Another of the principals will be Leroy Morton, vaudeville partner of Miss Robinson. The pair has played Keith circuit for 25 consecutive weeks.

GOAT ALLEY OPENS UP IN HARLEM

Bobbed Heads Not In Keeping With Play Set In 1800

By EVA A. JESSYE

NEW YORK—"Goat Alley" by Ernest Howard Culbertson and direct from the Princess Theatre, downtown, opened Monday night at the Alhambra Theatre on Seventh Avenue. The house seating aproximately two thousand and was half full at the close of the performance.

Goat Alley, so named after the locale might be tersely dened as the story of a winsome, curly headed girl, who struggle as she might, could not shake free from the "Fell clutch of Circumstane."

GREAT IN HUMAN INTEREST

Thestory is not remarkly written, staked, or with the exception of three characters acted; what is remarkable is the keen human interest, suspense and plausibility of the various situations. It is true to life and its parallel can be found in almost every city, large or small.

THE STORY

Lucy Belle Dorsey, played by Evelyn Ellis, is a bit of drift-wood thrown at a tender age to suffle for herself, mother dead, father gone, the gradually begins to mingle with questionable characters, finally taking up with one Jeff Bisbee, bad man about town and who abuses her until unable to bear it longer she runs away. She finds refuge in Goat Alley with Sam Reed (A. B. Comathirere) and there finds the most happiness she has known. The two are sincerely in love and plan a real home among decent people. Sam does not known of Lucy's former connection with Jeff and when told by Lizzie Gibbs, a lewd alley woman (Dorothy Paul), goes nearly insane with jealousy and ager.

He finally forgives Lucy, btoh vowing eterinal fidelity. He threatens Lucy with death should she ever deceive him. Jeff, returning to town, tracks Lucy down. His visit to the shack edius EoTcAOINUNUNUNSH shack is cut short by the police from whom he is in hiding, but he returns for her and in a fight with Sam is worsted.

Sam is sent up for four years. Lucy, loving him sticking to her vow, undergoes temptation and reverses. Her brother, shiftless, treacherous, (Edward Thompson) steals her last cent and her little daughter, Fanny, is crying for something to eat. That was the last straw....Lucy reasons to herself....' any other girl would do the same, aind rents the spare room to Chick Avery (Baron Bryant) who for several years has awaited this chance. The "Star Boarder" checks out after a year or so, leaving Lucy with a young baby whose birth Lucy was concealed from the neighbors. Unexpectedly Sam returns, released by good behavior.

our great grand-parents and certainly cannot be liked with the mean bobs, (and they did look too good) as turned out by the Harlem barber. Of course the public more than appreciates a beautiful head, but in the cause of AeRT.... What I would like to know is, which fits the period of the play, the dialect or the bobbed hair? In other words, when did it happen, in 1800 or 1927? Seriously, the effectiveness was lesened by such absurdly exaggerated dialect.

Dorothy Paul is missing a good opportunity by being too much inclined to giggle at her own "hardboiled-ness" She is a god type and not half bad as an actress but someone should persuade her not to laugh and to find several more rough, tough gestures. All she has done so far was to jamb her fists on her hips. The chorus of the current musicals should be replete with suggestions.

Prices which were not rendered, he

Elizabeth Williams as Aunt Rebecca (natural, typical, could not have been excelled.

Edward Thompson, past master of "subtle dramatics" entitled to high commendation for his interpretation of the no account, excuse giving, insinuating brother of Lucy. Hayes Proyor, briefly on the stage, gave a good account of himself for the allotted period. His was the part of an old man scared to death of evil olm 15s'bythezot,dETAOINUNUNNU difficult role)

Lucy denies everything and has confronted by Sam who has been told of the baby by Lizzie. Sam of her innocence when Aunt Becky rushes in excited and nervous screaming that the baby had been fished out of the water. Sam says not a word but ber to death. He picks up his cap... catching Lucy b ythe throat choked the door opens....shuts.

As said in the beginning, it is the story of a winsome curly headed girl in the fell clutch of circumstance. Splendid performances were given by Evelyn Ellis (hers is a particularly part and may be rated about 85 per cent.

The production was staged and directed by Egon Brecher of the Civic Repertory Theatre Company, which, with this play, takes up its abode in The Alhambra Theatre.

"LULU BELLE" DID NOT PAY BELASCO

Dean Of Producers Says He Lost $250,000 On Last Four Plays

NEW YORK.— After stating that he had lost $250,000 in the production of his last four plays, including "Lulu Belle", the drama of Negro life in Harlem, David Belasco declared that he was willing to lose more in the presentation of clean plays in a statement to the New York press, last [illegible].

Mr. Belasco is the dean of American producers. He said in part:

"There were no profits—no, not even on 'Lulu Belle', because we had to take in $16,500 a week to break even on that production. We closed it after a year when the receipts in the final weeks fell to about $12,500. With the cost of the cast and the mechanical crew, profits were impossible from the outset.

"There you are, a quarter of a million in a season, and that does not include costs expended before the season began. But I am not discouraged nor grieved, for it was my money, every penny of it, and it represents the money that the public gave me in recognition of my efforts in other years.

"I would burn down my theatre before I would stage a dirty play to attract salacious patronage to the box-office—but I have paid a terrific price in my attempt to present wholesome, sentimental plays."

When reminded that "Lulu Belle" was not rated as the purest of plays, Belasco responded that this was a fragment of life as it is lived, and he likened Lenore Ulric's role to Carmen in Harlem, a creature born in wickedness and unable to overcome it.

COURT DEPRIVES NEGRO BOY, 14, OF $100 A WEEK

New York, April 7.—(AP)—From the night clubs of New York to the sidewalks of St. Louis, that's the trip next on the program for "Snowball" Harris, 14-year-old negro and his banjo.

"Snowball" can't play the banjo any more for Paul Whiteman, band leader, Magistrate Flood, in West Side court, decided today, and agreed to discharge a complaint against "Snowball's" portly employer if he would pay the boy's fare back home, where he was "discovered" and lured.

"Snowball" was making $100 a week here in a musical show, when the children's society ottied the law against the public performance of a minor.

The Triumph of the Negro

THE CHARLESTON CRAZE.

From the "Manchester Guardian."

The American negro dance called the Charleston is more and more invading the life of this Imperial city. The most curious development of it is that in suburban stations on the Mondays when girl workers in the City are waiting for the trains they congregate into groups and dance the Charleston on the platform in the misty London morning. A custom has sprung up, I am told, by which a self-appointed leader will look round her and signal out a girl and say, "Your turn. Show us what you have learnt in the week-end," and the girl indicated will then do her best to show all she knows in the knee-shaking ritual. Be it noted the young men do not enter into this at all.

Not that the young men are idle. A big business man tells me that when he rang for his "bell-hop," as they call the boys in big establishments who attend bells and run about, the boy presented himself with his knees going all the time and his shoulders wagging. The big business man told him to stop that at once, and the boy said "yessir," and stopped his head and shoulders moving but went on working at the knees. In the lifts now-a-days the lift-boy tries to stop Charlestoning until the lift is empty, but rarely succeeds. Most terrible of all is that in the public schools now, all the best boys learn the new steps. A generation ago they would have been soused or otherwise discouraged, but now their elders get their fags to teach them the new steps.

There can be no doubt that the negro is conquering England as he has conquered America. How proud the American negro must feel nowadays when he visits our ancient cities and finds our intelligentsia singing or more usually listening to his spirituals on the gramophone, and the rest of the country dancing his inspired steps to tunes inspired by him! "Is," as Bret Harte once asked, "the Caucasian played out?"

Florence Mills on the Negroes' Hardships

By FLORENCE MILLS, the famous coloured comedienne in the *London Chronicle*.

"What a pity she isn't white." This was the remark made by a woman as I left the stage door the other evening.

It is not the first time such a comment has been passed. It is the eternal burden of the coloured people—the penalization for an accident of birth—to be made to feel out of focus with the rest of humanity.

There are some people I have met who appear to find it difficult to credit a Negro with a soul. Perhaps they are prepared to admit that he has a "soul of sorts," but that it is on the same plane as that of the white race they refuse to acknowledge.

A few years ago this attitude towards coloured people was very marked. To-day it is not so much in evidence, but it still exists.

There are still people who think that a Negro has about as much sensitiveness as a brute beast; that he is a person apart, dominated by strange complexes and desires. To them a white soul in a black skin appears an impossible combination.

How absurd it all is—how utterly unfair! There is not a coloured man or a coloured woman in existence who does not bitterly resent the sentiment that drives them beyond the pale.

If those who consciously or unconsciously outrage the sensibilities of the Negro knew—as I know—what wounds they inflict, what suffering and misery they cause, they would view the man of colour from a different perspective. They would know, at any rate, that he has a soul not so very different from their own.

They would learn something, perhaps, of the acute sensibility of his feelings, of his childish trust in human nature, of his humility and instinctive generosity.

In America, despite the very real prejudice that exists, the Negro race is rearing its head in all branches of social life. In England, where the colour line is practically non-existent, Negroes have achieved a virtual equality.

Only a few months ago a Negro poet in America produced a volume of verse that proved a best-seller. Critics were astonished at his insight and his delicacy of thought and feeling.

But it is a hard struggle, I know, for I have been through it. For years before I became a success and the white people smiled on me, I struggled against adversity and prejudice.

When I was born I was just a poor piccaninny, with no prospects but a whole legacy of sorrow. My parents were far too poor to afford me a good education, and it was obvious that I would have to fend for myself.

One day when I was playing in the street with a number of other children a white comedian who was appearing close to my home saw me and took a fancy to my face. From him I learned my first song: "Don't Cry, My Little Piccaninny."

That was the beginning. At the age of four I appeared with him on the stage with the proud intention of singing my little song. Half way through I saw a black-faced comedian standing in the wings waiting to go on. His make-up was so startling that I broke off in terror and had to be led off the stage weeping bitterly.

From the age of eight, when I appeared in a production called "The Sons of Ham," it has just been one long fight for success. Always there was the bogey of my colour barring the way.

That I was able to win through at all was due to sheer determination to rise superior to prejudice.

Perry Bradford Is Given Credit For Introducing 'Black Bottom' To New York

NEW YORK, April 14.—Perry Bradford, song writer and composer of the "Crazy Blues" is given credit for introducing the "Black Bottom" dance to New York in the April issue of McClure's Magazine. In a feature article entitled "The Dance That Set America Wiggling," by Virginia Swain, and illustrated with photographic poses by Ann Pennington, the author says: "Perry Bradford, Negro composer of Crazy Blues fame, introduced the Black Bottom to New York. He tells the story: 'Down home, my folks live in a little Negro settlement called Darktown, just outside of Atlanta. Darktown is probably the dancing capital of the American Negro. The people dance in the open air and indoors, at picnics and house parties, and in the church, most of all. Every prayer meeting of the African Methodist Church ends in a sort of Black Bottom circle dance, with the dancers clapping their hands and crooning, and the preacher calling the steps. Well, visiting my mother and dad down there in 1922, I saw a girl and a man dancing a step that looped pretty good to me.' And they were waving their hands and singing over and over:

Hop down front and then you doodle back,
Mooch to the left and then you mooch to the right—
Your hands on your hips an' do the mess around.
Break a let until you're near the ground.

I asked them what it was, and wrote down the Black Bottom. I wrot down the Black Bottom words and the melody, and when I came back to New York I trained Ethel Ridley, a Negro dancer, to do the steps. She danced the first Black Bottom in New York in a Harlem musical show called Dinah, produced in 1923. Broadway producers on a sight-seeing trip in Harlem noticed the dance and imported it to Broadway. Within a few weeks every stage dancer was clamoring for instruction in the dance and society buds were paying Harlem Negroes hundreds of dollars a night to attend debutante parties and demonstrate the step.'"

Only Negro Cantor Is Star In Plays In Hebrew Theatre

Thomas LaRue, of Newark, N. J., said to be the only Negro Jewish cantor in America, who was heard some years ago by New York audiences at the Lenox Avenue Theatre, 116th street, and who has recently been starring in the great Yiddish stage success, "Yente Talebanda," which played at the National Theatre for two seasons, will be starred in a new presentation.

He has been signed by the Premier Circuit for a series of performances, the first to be given at the Stone Theatre, Brooklyn, on March 3.

Race Actors Playing Important Roles

HOLLYWOOD, Calif., Feb. 24.—(By A. N. P.)—Negro actors in the many Hollywood studios are being given better and better parts and their natural ability to portray various types is being more generally recognized. This is exemplified in the selection of two young players, Virgil Owens and Lloyd Shackleford, for important parts in the "Claw" now being filmed. This is a gripping tale of the Boer War with its stirring scenes and breath-taking climaxes, starring Norman Kerry, Claire Windsor and Edmond Carewe.

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Blackbottom Craze Financial Flop On Pennsylvania Ave.

Efforts Of Shopkeepers To Capitalize On Dance With Blackbottom Trousers, Caps And Dresses Unsuccessful, Stroller Finds

BY RALPH MATTHEWS

Thoughts while strolling. Efforts of Pennsylvania Avenue tradesmen to captalize on the blackbottom craze, which doesn't seem to be a craze at all are proving as unsuccessful as the efforts of dance enthusiasts to make the dance of that name supersede the Charleston.

Even the girls, ever on the alert fro a new thrill, seemed to flop for the blackbottom dress which the advertisements say is an exact reproduction of the one worn by Ann Pennington when she introduced the dance on Broadway.

To judge from the amount of stock still on hand the blackbottom caps are not being bought as rapidly as one might expect. These are so constructed that the crown, if you call it that, is made of regular cap material of various hues while the peak is plaid. The blackbottom cuff, which has already appeared on men's trousers of the new yarn materials, has now put in its appearance on white flannel and duck breeches.

The blackbottom tie, the only practical thing of the lot, has come into favor with the poolroom boys at the lower end of the avenue. Other than this the blackbottom is suffering a relapse right now in the camp of its friends.

Home Made Hats

A young man who contemplates marriage will find encouragement in the announcement that the hats girls are wearing this summer cost exactly 30 cents. This is due to another flight of the feminine mind which makes its popular to buy a yard of felt and make her own hat. They purchase the goods at any five and ten cent store where the sales girls give instructions and go home and make the hat. Some girls I am told have a felt hat to match every dress.

A Unique Party

Drifting thru a catacomb of dingy alleys you come suddenly upon the newly erected Samuel Coleridge Taylor School. Found the queerest party in progress there Thursday when 35 little tots from the East Street section, probably the city's most neglected, were guests of Mrs. Nellie Turner, the public bath attendant.

The invited guests, we are told, were those who had taken showers regularly when Mrs. Turner was in charge of the baths at School No. 114-A, prior to her appointment at the new school. Several years ago public baths were installed in this school by Principal Howard M. Gross to promote cleanliness in the community. While they were primarily installed for school children, yet because of the lack of proper facilities in the crowded tenements the school showers became the Saturday night bathroom of the working class thruout the neighborhood.

A similiar service is being performed at the new school which is situated in the heart of what was dubbed the "Lung Block" because of the crowded conditions and habit of disease. Figures show that thousands use the baths every month.

Writer Says Gilpin and Robeson Are Just Mediocre

Fails to Find Anything Unusual in Our Plays and Actors Now on American Stage

By STARK YOUNG

[In The New Republic]

Whenever Negro material appears in our theater, as it has done from time to time these last few seasons, we get a reaction that is an interesting comment on the realism in vogue nowadays among us. It may be either Negro acting or plays dealing with Negro life or both; in every case there is a special sort of enthusiasm or reaction drawn from critics and audience.

When the players are Negroes, we are sure to hear from one quarter or another that there is remarkable acting to be seen in town. People who like to champion causes push themselves on to a somewhat greater enthusiasm than they might express in the case of ordinary white actors. People who are tired of the flatness of most of our acting and would relish something more of warmth and glow and exoticism, rush their hearts to these Negro actors' feet. People who shine by discovering an instance of newness which is great art at last, the proclamation of which will also add to the proclaimer's reputation for courage and prophetic insight, hasten to trumpet the new greatness or the new real-artness.

It is much better to enjoy these Negro players, if you like, but to keep it clear in your head that in most cases what they exhibit is not acting at all, to speak of. It is no better than the usual playing that we see on Broadway, and in many instances not so good, because of its lack of a technical and professional training that might project it into a minor craft at least. This is true, though it does not prevent the Negro players from being, if you like, more interesting, or less uninteresting, than the usual run on Broadway. The problem at issue rests on the distinction between substance and idea, between medium and form, between the material of acting and the acting art by which something is said.

NONSENSE TO CALL ACTING "GREAT"

It is nonsense to say that these Negro players are great actors. Such talk does little good either to the art they attempt or to the players themselves. Mr. Gilpin, of "The Emperor Jones," beginning rather poorly, developed in time a certain amount of acting skill. Mr. Paul Roebson, of the same play, of "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and other ventures, is scarcely an actor at all. He suggests a fine, understanding man brought to the service of an idea which he realizes deeply and nobly and which he renders on the stage as best he can; but this does not make him an actor. These two players and others from time to time have had splendid moments, instances where a moderate amount of craft, a great wave of emotion and a telling natural endowment and quality carried them to remarkable heights; but this does not make them great actors. The stress in the case of these Negro players falls elsewhere. It is as acting material that they are notable.

Negroes are by nature a superb acting medium. They have voices that are engaging by their strangeness to our ears and that are theatrical because they are moving and warm and flexible. They have flexible bodies and perfect relaxation; they have a quick emotional response and a gift of rapport and mutual interest among themselves that is unfailing. They have, too, very often, a kind of simple humanity and sweetness that is touching and persuasive, a freshness and spontaneity that is disarming, and a suggestion of power and force, brutality and abandon that heightens the impression of that vitality by which the stage comes alive. All this, however, should not be confused with acting, which consists of the medium plus the projection into a form that expresses the idea; all this has the same relation to acting that a beautiful voice has to singing. To distinguish between the material and the form in an art is the beginning of any knowledge of it.

NEW MATERIAL ONLY INTERESTING PART

When plays of Negro life are given, it is not uncommon to hear it said that this dramatic material is interesting because it is a change from the usual everyday American life around us. The theater is said to turn from the usual scene because of the flatness of our American material, because everything is so drab and casual and matter of fact. This may be, to some partial extent, true. Certainly there must be many of us that are good and sick of seeing the lives of clerks whose ambition is to succeed like the boss and to marry the dear little girl in the last act; of amiable, humorous drummers, and blatant politicians, and good mothers living in flats where you can hear the elevated pass or the subway rumble every five minutes. We are tired of an accepted stage speech that has no snap, either of its own or the snap of life. It is more fun to see a Colored adventure, a Negro family, to be entertained with the variegated whims and the spicy speech of Negroes. But this is not the whole discussion.

TRUE REALISM IS ACCURATELY EXPRESSED

In the case of both the Negro actor on the stage and the Negro life in dramas, much of the advantage derives from a certain escape and a certain evasion. We escape from the usual realism practiced in our theater, we evade having to bother with accepting another theory instead of the realistic, or with putting ourselves into a perspective and a response different from that we give to our usual realistic theater. What we do is to let this acting and this life shown in these plays pass as real; we let it go as quite as real as in "A Man's Man" or "The First Year" or "Turn to the Right" or "Saturday's Children" and hundreds of other pieces good and bad. The result is, we retain the comfort of the theory that the theater is a place where everyone recognizes the truth, where you see something natural and honest-to-God, something true, sincere and none of your arty art; we retain this easy attitude and at the same time enjoy the high glow, the fantasy, the poetry and odd spice of the Negro material. These actors are giving us what acting is, we can say; they put themselves into the character's place, feel his emotions and then are just natural. The difference is only that they are Negroes, who are different. The life we see in these plays of Negro life is different, otherwise they are the same natural pictures of life. All, therefore, is well; actors, drama and audience have each their little flight and nothing is upset.

Against realism as a method there is nothing to be said, since obviously there are ideas that can be expressed only by this method, just as there are ideas that other methods must express. Great examples of realism like "The Three Sisters" at the Civic Repertory theater or Chekhov's "Cherry Orchard" or Miss Pauline Lord's performance in "Mariners," speak for themselves. Taking realism as ordinarily practiced among our playwrights, we may cite many examples of success, or success at least in certain parts or elements of the play. The emotional reactions of Maxwell Anderson's "Saturday Children," for instance, are exact and true. They are really imaginative. In George Kelly's "Daisy Mayme" or "The Show Off" the idiom is precisely caught; it is alive with the edge and vibration of living speech. But to catch the sting of life in any way, or even its vibrant surface, is a rare thing. Our theater realism in general has the sterility of platiutde, and all the lack of ideas that the casual implies. In depth of likeness, sentiment and comment, it is thin and easy.

Poetic drama at its worst runs to bombast and mawkishness; formal drama runs to arid classicism; and, most easily of all, since there are no canons, formulas or traditions to be heeded, our American realism runs to what makes it no wonder that the Negro actors and Negro life are a welcome if confusing relief.

"All God's Chillun" In Broadw'y Revival

NEW YORK — "All God's Chillun Got Wings," the Negro drama by Eugene O'Neil, opened here in a revival at the Majestic last week.

The play has white persons in two of the leading roles. Paul Robeson was cast in an important part in its former Broadway appearance.

Pretty Josephine Baker Becomes Countess di Albertini

Two poses of Countess de Albertini as she appears nightly in the Follies Bergere.

By Albert Brooks

Josephine Baker, 21-year-old bronze beauty, from the U.S.A., is now Countess Josephine di Albertini. This little idol of Paris has married an Italian Count .By so doing, she has added color to a jaded Italian aristocracy; scarcely anything but titles could be added to Josephine.

Miss Baker has been called the idol of Paris, which means she is a real artist; for Paris has long since been the bane of artistic mediocrities. In Paris the great artists reach the heights ,and Josephine is great.

It has not been long since Miss Baker performed in this country in minor roles in the popular road shows that toured the cities of the East. She played in the "Chocolate Dandies," "Bamville," and "Shuffle Along." In such shows, Miss Baker was considered just a good chorus girl but she was constantly in demand for such roles. During these years, she was still in her teens, a stripling of a lass.

In 1924, she joined the "Plantation Review," on the winter garden roof in New York City. Josephine had now reached the age of 17; but she already was some stepper. At this early age, her talent had gained appearance before appreciative audiences; her success was assured.

The reports of Miss Baker's reverses of six years back are all poppy-cock; for who would expect wonderful achievements of a 15-year-old girl? She was merely a "kid," following her hobby, gaining experience—just a diamond in the rough!

Opportunity came to her at 19 years of age. She was taken with twenty-one singers and dancers to Europe. The troupe finally reached Paris, the goal of great artists; and here, Josephine reached the hearts of Parisians.

Other girls had reached the heights in Paris. Florence, at Mitchell's, had been the favorite of Montmarte. The Prince of Wales had been a regular visitor; and many nights, franc notes had been waved by enthusiastic crowds, seeking admission.

But, what happened when Josephine hit Paris? She set Paris on the ears. She was different; she had color; and Paris, used to everything, saw something new.

So it was a short step to the Follies Bergeres, where Paris worshipped its theatrical idol. But—this short step gave the talented Josephine the luxuries of life. Imagine this 21-year-old girl, with a chateau, a limousine, and a French maid. She revels in silks, jewels, and finery.

Now she has married a count. She is now Countess Josephine. And so runs the story of the poor little St. Louis girl, who went to

SHE'S COMIN' HOME

The Smiling Josephine Baker, idol of Parisian Amusement resorts whom it is rumored will desert Gay Paree for the good old United States, which, with all its faults, is home.

STAGE CHATTER

News of Artists from Coast to Coast.

WILLIAM A. BUCKNER, the robust trainer of the Chicago White Sox, if we may assume the responsibility of speaking of men whose words and means are ordinarilly relegated to the sports pages, has done us the favor to inform us of the exact location of "Lula Belle' when that show hits Chicago early in September. Friend Bill has discovered that the David Belasco production will open at the Blackstone theatre in Michigan avenue just before Labor Day. This department had written a letter to Mr. Belasco asking for the name of the theatre in which the show is to play but a more or less indirect answer advised us that the show would open in Chicago. I take it, however, that Mr. Belasco must have discussed my letter with Buckner or some of the Sox players for the Buckner letter was a precise answer to our questionaire.

MILLER AND LYLES, the New York Producers, will show Broadway a few new faces in their show soon to be launched in the east. Flattering offers have been made Evelyn Preer to have the Belasco star join th new production but she has not accepted as yet. It is doubtful that Miss Preer will accept the Miller and Lyles offer in view of the splendid contract she now holds with "Lula Belle." There is some talk of Evelyn taking the major role now being played by Lenore Ulric who has been quoted as frowning on the possibilities of returning to the show. Miss Ulric at present is starring in vaudeville with much success.

SISSLE AND BLAKE are playing in Chicago this week. Had a long talk with Ubie Blake Wednesday and learned that the stars are not considering the matter of producing for some little time yet. A few weeks ago some "live" publicity man took the itme to broadcast to the west news that the former Shuffle Along stars would be heard from in the very near future, and that Broadway would get the noise.

BILLY KING AND SHELTON BROOKS are to be seen at the Grand theatre for the next several weeks. The comedians are heading a "musical stock" gang that has been a real hit since the opening some three weeks ago. Mr. King came out of a silence of several weeks to launch his latest efforts and the house is indeed lucky to have the star back. Brooks, prior to the opening, had been starring in vaudeville along with Ollie Powers, another member of the present company.

EASTERN CRITICS, watching the rehearsals of Miller and Lyles new show have suggested that the show is top-heavy with comedy. This, I take it, means that the producers have other comedy along with that supplied by themselves.

BILLY MACK'S GANG at the Monogram theatre must necessarily be one of class from the very splendid things critics have had to say in their behalf of late. This column had decided to pay Billy a visit t'other night but for various reasons had to cancel the trip. The show is to be there for a few weeks yet, however, I understand and this writer is to pay the piece a visit

SAMMY STEWART, director of th eMetropolitan theatre orchestra, seems to have been given the "run-around" by the various orchestra leaders about the city. Mr. Stewart, so we get it, invited a number of prminent leaders to direct the music at the theatre on various evenings as his guests and only one is known to have accepted, or even answered him for that matter, and that was Clarence Jones. It is certainly too bad that the music makers can't get together and cut out the frolic.

ELOISE BENNETT, the petite star, is having a great success of late. Miss Bennet at present is starring for King and Brooks at the Grand Theatre and going over fine. The little tsar came to the Grand from the Cafe de Paris where she scored with equal success. A real find this girl.

METROPOLITAN THEATRE, according to rumor, has been sold to the owner of the Owl Theatre, 47th at State street. The new management is to move

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in the first of this week, we are unofficially advised. Ascher Brothers the present owners, are ridding themselves of a number of their houses according to the same rumor.

JIMMIE FERGUSON CONTINUES to star at the Cafe de Paris and about the city in various theatres. Jimmie is working at the Apoolo theatre on East 47th street. Mr. Ferguson, a rare comedian, has been scoring heavily since coming here from New York to play the Cafe de Paris following Ethel Water's return to New York.

W. R. ARNOLD, PUBLICITY MANAGER of the T. O. B. A. spent Saturday, Sunday and Monday in Chicago looking over the progress of the various theatres about Chicago. Mr. Arnold is well known about the circuit of the T. O. B. A. wheel and his many friends were pleased o have him present. He returned home Monday afternoon.

BUTTERBEANS AND SUSIE were a riot at the Grand Theatre in the opening Monday evening. This clever team has not worked Chicago for some time prior to this showing and were seen greeting their many friends back stage after the first performance. For fun, yes a riot, there is no better team in the country than this same Butterbeans and Susie. Their popularity never wanes.

PLANTATION CAFE, Thirty-fifth street at Calumet avenue, is slated for an early opening. Both Walter Burton and Martin Paley are mentioned as managers of the place but as yet neither man has accepted. Paley is at present managing the Cafe de Paris and Burton is acting as assistant manager so you see neither of the men happen to be suffering for the absence of toil.

ROSCOE RED SIMMONS is working at the Dreamland Cafe, 3520 South State Street and doing fine. Simmons, a nifty sort of an entertainer, takes splendidly with the house's large following. Simmons recently closed a long engagement at the Cafe de Paris under the management of Martin B. Paley.

OLLIE POWERS is filling in after his performance at the Grand, on the bill at the Dreamland and scoring as of old. No better liked performers ever entered the Dreamland than Powers and Alberta Hunter and the patrons as well as the management is mighty glad to have one of the team back. Powers is at the cafe for an indefinite run, we are told this week.

ADELADE HALL, EDITH SPENCER, BROWN AND MCGRAW, with Mae Alix, make up the personnel of the Sunset Cafe and all are registering heavily.

ANNA WHITE, the petite black-face star of the King and Brooks production which closed at the Grand last week, is one of the very clever performers on the stage today. Miss White's comedy song and dance numbers were a riot at the theatre as usual. She dresses as a small girl and sings an "Ethel Waters" and combines the two to take the theatre by storm.

ELECTRIC LIGHTS, now displaying above each of the cafes on the south side are a big improvement. For a long time this score was neglected with the result the outer portion of the places assumed the appearance of a barn. We are pleased to see this move on the part of the various managers. Keep up the good work, fellows.

DAVID STARKMAN of Colored Players Film who was slated to arrive in Chicago did not come. Mr. Starkman is busily engaged in placing his pictures, "A Prince of His Race," "Children of Fate," and a few others and will not reach Chicago for the next several weeks. I have an idea that failure to decide on a date for the showing of the picture at a local theatre caused the cancellation of the arrival.

LATEST FIGURES ON LULA BELLE, despite rumors to the contrary show that the production leads the field in the matterd of box office figures during its eastern run. Coming into New York from Philadelphia the show proved an instant hit and never ran fare below capacity during its entire run.

BENTON OVERSTREET, Albert White and Estelle Harris are rehearsing a singing act that will play local dates. This trio is well known in Chicago having filled numerous engagements here and should go over big.

MAXINE HENDRICK and Clara Lewis will soon tour the T. O. B. A. time with an A-1 dance act. These girls are clever and are well known to theatre goer throughout the country.

ETHEL MAE BROWN, the pretty little stage star, is engaged in the business of pushing orange drinks over the counter. The place is filled with theatre goers and performers from morning until night. Ethel Mae is very popular and the people crowd the place to view the always evident smile which she wears.

BOB HAYES is anxious to have Clarence Nance communicate with him. Says Bob, "It is very important and I must have Clarence—hence the line in this ection of the Whip.

Several times a week Josephine Baker, the premiere danseuse at the "Folies Bergere," and the American who first introduced the Charleston to Paris, would bring a party and would give an expert exhibition of the Charleston in the centre of an admiring circle.

Josephine is a Filipino by birth, but of course an American citizen. She is not exactly beautiful but is intensely fascinating to know and can always be relied upon to do the unexpected. For instance, one night she jumped into the middle of the supper table at which she was sitting and with a glass of champagne in each hand danced the reckless measures of the Charleston—without spilling a drop!

I once visited her luxurious flat near the Champs Elysees and was amazed at its almost sybaritic splendor. The salon was a riot of satin cushions, and reclining on a big divan was Josephine Baker's pet baby lioness. Another surprise which was in store for me was her swimming bath, which has a queer mirage effect made by hidden electric lights, which give one the impression that the bath is full of bathing girls. It was most artistic and cost over two hundred thousand francs, I believe. Every time Josephine entered "Paradis d'Amour" the orchestra immediately commenced to play the Charleston, and cries of "Here comes the Charleston Baby!" would be set up. Smiling broadly, "Mademoiselle Banana," as she is often called because that is all her costume consists of at the Folies Bergere, would immediately Charleston down the middle of the floor. They wer gay nights, those!

NOTED WHITE ACTORS TO BE STARRED IN FIRST FEATURE NEGRO COMEDY

Warner Bros. Unwilling To Trust Leading Parts to Negro Actors

Hollywood, Calif., July 16—(P. C. N. B.,—Regardless of the fact that the best cemedian on or off the screen is the American Negro, Warner Bros., who are filming the first feature length comedy production calling for an entire Negro cast to be produced by any of the leading producers, have decided that the time is not yet ripe for Negroes to be featured as stars, even in a Negro comedy situation with an exclusive Negro, vocale background. As a result they have decided to star two white comedians, Tom Wilson and Heinie Conklin in black face roles in "Ham and Eggs at the Front."

Louise Fazenda Out

Tom Wilson will appear as the brunette swain, while the part of the Colored siren announced for Louise Fazenda is stated to have been eliminated. Myrna Loy is featured as a Senegalese girl, while Heinie Conklin will co-star with Wilson, the "Ham" and the other "Eggs."

200 Negro Extras Used

For the military background; sets reproducing the French villages and front during the World War, have been built and over 200 Colored extras as Negro troops are used. The action starts off in a Georgia town, the sets of which are now being built by Studio Manager William Koenig. Roy Del Ruth is the director while the screen story is the work of Robert Dillon and Jimmy Starr.

By Catherine Stuart

CHAPTER V.

(Concluded from Last Sunday)

Josephine Baker, the Filipino-American Girl, Who Helped Make Mrs. Stuart's Parisian Cabaret a Success.

The New Plays

MONDAY

'BOTTOMLAND," a revue, written and presented by Clarence Williams, will open at the Princess Theatre Monday night. The all-Negro cast includes Clarence Williams, Eva Taylor, Sara Martin, Mason and Henderson, James D. Lillard and Katherine Henderson.

'MANHATTANERS," a musical revue, will be ushered in Monday night at the Grove Street Theatre, presented by Lee Lawren and Lawrence Moore. The book and lyrics are by George Oppenheimer, and music by Alfred Nathan, Jr.

WEDNESDAY

'BARE FACTS OF 1927," a musical show, is scheduled to open at the Triangle Theatre in Greenwich Village Wednesday night. The lyrics are by Marian Gillespie and Menlo Mayfield, the music by John Milton Hagen and sketches by Stuart Hamill. The cast includes Ethel Fox, Margaret Haas, Janey Haas, Byron Tigges, Austin Street, Joe Battle, Frank Marshall, Gordon Hawthorne, Mary Green and Vera Loday. Kathleen Kirkwood is the producer.

Vodery Hailed As A Genius In England

Will Vodery, native son of Philadelphia, is creating more favorable comment in London theatrical circles than has been accorded a devotee of the glaring footlights for many days.

Writing in the London Daily Express last Wednesday, Hannen Swaffer, foremost English theatrical critic hailed Mr. Vodery as "The Colored Genius."

"It seems strange," said Mr. Swaffer, "to see a colored man, in the person of Will Vodery, supervising the orchestra in His Majesty's—that was until Constance Collier, who, by the way, may shortly be seen at the St. Martin's in "Meet the Wife," reminded me at lunch that Samuel Coleridge-Taylor conducted his own music for Tree's production of "Antony and Cleopratra."

Vodery, who has been paid five hundred pounds, equivalent to approximately $2400 in United States currency, to orchestrate George Meyer's music, seems to be a master of his business, observed Mr. Swaffer.

"Myer, Leslie, Julian Jones, the conductor, and Vodery had an argument over the end of a number when I was there," relates Mr. Swaffer. "In a minute, shouting one order to the bassoon, another to the oboe, to nearly a dozen instruments in turn, one after the other, several bars were entirely changed, Vodery relying upon his memory.

Most of the time Meyer sat alone, as melancholy as ever—not even his own jazz cheers him up—while Vodery and Leslie argued. George Meyer looked most sad of all when "Cuddle Up" was played, this although it is to be a joyous, inspiring, get-together melody. He leaned on a silver-knobbed stick and thought all to himself, just like Hamlet.

As for Vodery, he is on the job all the time. After "Black Birds," which he conducts now, have finished for the evening he sits up all night orchestrating tunes. Then in the morning Leslie finds fault.

"Anything Mr. Leslie wants," says Vodery; then he alters it.

In a letter to the TRIBUNE Mr. Vodery stated that the show, "Black Birds" is a big hit in England. He is at present writing a 3rd edition and has contracts for two shows for C. B. Cochrane, leading English producer. He expects to return to this country sometime in June.

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ON KEITH CIRCUIT NOW

"Duke" Ellington and his Washingtonians, new Keith Circuit stars. The entire eight" is composed of boys reared in Washington. "Duke" is a former Armstrong Hi student. They wanted him to become a doctor, but another art called him and you hear him now through Victor records and vaudeville.

"UNCLE TOM'S CABIN" REVIEWED BY CALVIN

By FLOYD J. CALVIN

NEW YORK, Nov. 24.—Through the courtesy of Miss Eva A. Jessye, leader and manager of the Dixie Jubilee Singers, who accompany the film, I had the pleasure of sitting through the last Wednesday two-hour and a half matinee performance of the motion picture, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," now playing at the Central Theatre, Broadway and 47th street.

Those Negroes who hated David Wark Griffith for his "Birth of a Nation" should flock to see Carl Laemmle's version of the famous Harriet Beecher Stowe story, and I feel sure they would agree with me that Mr. Laemmle seems to have tried to take just the opposite view of the Negro that Griffith took.

Where Griffith's film inspired the rankest kind of race hate, the Laemmle film pictures the Negro being taken advantage of by a stronger race that is cowardly in its strength. It will be interesting to know how the South reacts to the picture. The dramatic interest in Simon Legree's brutality is heightened by alternately showing Legree brutalizing his slaves and the Union soldiers marching toward the plantation, as if to effect a rescue, which they finally do, liberating other slaves as they go. If the South swallows that it has changed since I was down there five years ago.

All through the story the Negro is shown to splendid advantage, if a slave can be shown to advantage. The audience, almost all white, generously applauded each time a slave scored a point. Eliza's crossing the river on ice is about as realistic as it is possible for such a scene to be, for she really crossed, and everybody was holding to their seats praying for her to make it.

White people were used to play the parts of Eliza and her slave husband, but they did not wear makeup and were obviously white. It must be quite humiliating to some whites to see their own color treated as the blackest slave, as many mixed bloods actually were during the slavery.

James B. Lowe, as Uncle Tom, is of course the great attraction. His acting is superb. His humility makes you want to give him a swift kick at times, but when you reflect he is portraying a former condition you forget it. The forebearance of the slaves on the boats going down the river is truly moving. If ever a Negro felt like doing something to try to elevate his people, he ought to feel like it when he sees the eternal hope in the old slave's eyes in his darkest hours. Only faith could bring a people through that. And to see some of the young people of today throwing away golden opportunities makes one sick at heart when it is remembered that their grandfathers suffered to make this day possible for them.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin" has many lessons to teach the thoughtful person. It is humiliating for the colored spectator, but when you think of the $500 a week James B. Lowe was getting for that acting, you feel better.

RACE DRAMA PRAISED

IN PRIZE PLAY, "IN ABRAHAM'S BOSOM," COLORED PLAYERS AROUSE APPLAUSE—UPTOWN PLAYHOUSE NOW UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT

By E. F. Harkins in Boston Advertiser
Nov. 30, 1927

At the Arlington has started an entirely new chapter in Hub stage history, with the latest Pulitzer prize play, "In Abraham's Bosom," as the attraction.

C. D. Jacobson who is youthful and ambitious, but yet a veteran in the show game, has leased the Arlington and attached it to what is known in New York as the "subway circuit." To this circuit sooner or later go most of the plays that have been hits on Broadway and usually they make the trip at reduced prices. The circuit has been a success for years. Some of this success will now be passed on to the Arlington, provided Mr. Jacobson can book the right plays.

THOMAS MOSELEY OF N. Y.

Hero with part of Abraham, worth seeing, all next week in Arlington Treatre — A real actor — Part redeems race manhood

RACE DRAMA PRAISED

"In Abraham's Bosom" is a play about negroes living in the turpentine woods of Eastern North Carolina. The hero, Abraham McCranie, labors enthusiastically to uplift his race, but he labors under heavy handicaps. For one thing, he has the jealousy of his 'boss' son to contend with. The white boy naturally resents the fact that he and Abraham have the same father. The conflict between the two brings the play to a tragic climax. And meanwhile Abraham has had difficulty with his own son. As sometimes happens the uplifter is not a happy parent. Aiming to help many he has made a mess of it at home. His son is shiftless. Everything tends to drive Abraham to desperation. When at last the load is too heavy for him to bear, when insults and disappointments overwhelm him, he shoots his half-brother and is then shot down himself.

Talented

Paul Green who teaches at the University of North Carolina, wrote this tragedy of a too ambitious negro. He sketched his hero sympathetically. Abraham has all the virtues of his race. He is bright, kindly, eager to serve. His essentially heroic nature is the keynote of this sad yet absorbing drama.

Thomas Moseley portrays Abraham admirably. He is an actor who does credit to the genius of his race. All around the performance is excellent. Negro talent is not at all limited to musical comedy, although it seldom has an opportunity to shine in drama. Here we have the same well chosen company that appeared in Green's play during the long run at the Provincetown Playhouse in New York. The performance, in fact, is more impressive than the play. The Pulitzer prizes go in strange directions.

Applauded

"In Abraham's Bosom" is interesting and unconventional, but what excites most applause at the Arlington is the excellent acting by Moseley and others, including, by the way, two white players. L. Rufus Hill and Walter Warner, impersonating Col. McCranie and his son.

Lillian Gillam and Anyce Francis portray the hero's wife and aunt. They, too, win deserved applause. So does an excellent comedienne Armithine Lattimer, who plays the part of one of poor Abraham's wayward pupils.

Anyhow, this new venture at the Arlington has started in a way to rouse playgoers' curiosity. Here, indeed, is something out of the ordinary in dramatic offerings.

At the opening it drew a goodsized and appreciative audience. It certainly deserved this tribute.

ROBESON QUITS SPOKEN STAGE

Adopts Concert Field As Career, To Co-Star With Florence Mills In "Porgy."

WASHINGTON, D. C.—Paul Robeson, celebrated singer, actor and athlete who spent the week-end at Arundel-On-The-Bay here, told the AFRO-AMERICAN Sunday that he has given up all thought of work in the spoken drama and will devote his future to motion pictures and a career on the concert stage.

Mr. Robeson stated that he will do work for some of the larger film producers this summer and return to the concert stage when the season opens. The hero of the "Emperor Jones," "Black Boy," and several photoplays intimated that he may accept the male lead in the production of DuBose Heyward's "Porgy" which is to be done by Cecil B. DeMille. Florence Mills of "Blackbirds" fame, now in London, is reported to have been offered the leading female role.

Late press reports from England say that Miss Mills has denied that she has severed business relations with Lew Leslie, owner of the "Blackbirds," and will return to America. The star is at present appearing with the company at the Strand, London, and will probably go on tour with her fellows in a few weeks.

Noted French Theatrical Impressario Coming Here to Present Negro Shows

Maurice Gaugin Scores Race Fanatics and Believes That the Negro Should Be Given a Real Chance

An announcement of unusual interest was made today to the effect that Maurice Gaugin, noted theatrical impressario of France, is en route to America where he plans to present a number of all-Negro revues in the large cities of the East. Mr. Gaugin, it was learned through his personal representative, George Morris, whose headquarters are in New York City, will begin work on his productions immediately upon his arrival. Mr. Morris is well known through his association with Negro activities and made known a number of plans which Mr. Gaugin has formed for his revues on this side of the Atlantic.

First of all, it has been stated authoritatively, Mr. Gaugin intends to combine in his entertainments those things which are characteristic of Negro life as well as the elaborate staging that is typical of the Nordic theatres. The French impressario claims that there is no reason why the Negro should be expected to demonstrate his art in unrepaired-down and dilapidated theatres where the acoustics, lighting, comfort of the players and audiences are lacking. Furthermore, Maurice Gaugin is opposed to the prevalent practice of giving authentic Negroid plays and revues for Negro audiences alone. In his new producing unit he hopes to strike a medium which will please Nordic audiences as well, and thereby break down some of the unreasonable prejudices that exist among race fanatics.

The arrival in America of Mr. Gaugin prompted me to produce Negro entertainment for Europe, but before I undertake this task in Paris or any other city on the Continent I shall assemble casts of American Negroes, for I am firmly convinced that they are the best adapted to express themselves. In fact far more so than the Negroes of any other country. I have seen Josephine Baker many times, and I agree with French critics that she possesses personality and gifts that must certainly lie in other performers of her race. I hope to find and develop other artists of her caliber while I am in the States.

"Not only in Paris and London, but in Germany and parts of Russia, Negro revues, operettas and other forms of dramatic art can play not only successful but to highly appreciative audiences."

Returning to the question of the so-called "cycle" Maurice Gaugin points out that some years ago Negroid entertainment was a novelty and was well received in European cities, but that it died down suddenly and then sprang to life with the advent of Florence Mills and later with Josephine Baker.

It should be said that the Negro "cycle" is also true right here in America. The first impetus was given a few years ago when "Shuffle Along" demonstrated that Nordic audiences could derive a high degree of satisfaction from Negro actors. Charles Gilpin helped the cause along, as did Paul Robeson. Two years, however, intervened before many negro shows played in New York's "Great White Way." Then all of a sudden "Bottomland," "Africana," "Rang Tang," Lord Dunsany's "If," presented by the Grand Street Players, "Porgy," "Golden Dawn," under the Hammerstein banner "Show Boat," presented and produced by Florenz Ziegfeld, and other outstanding successes with all-Negro or part Negro casts sprang up. There will probably be a lull of a few years, and then even more Negro players will delight Broadway audiences.

Before the present Negro "cycle" is the result of his conviction that America is now in the midst of what he terms a Negro theatrical "cycle." He points to the fact that Europe is eargerly awaiting Negro entertainment on a larger scale than it has known previously. He cites the success of the late Florence Mills in London and the present popularity of Josephine Baker in his own city, Paris.

"The admiration for the Negro's art," said Gaugin in a recent interview, "is more apparent in Europe than in America, despite the fact that Americans continually shout that their country is a great democracy. The individual Negro in Europe is looked upon by the most aristocratic and autocratic individuals as a human being, and only in rare instances are expressions of prejudice heard—and in these instances the fanatical statements come from people of little consequence.

"This very state of affairs has passes, several Gaugin productions will undoubtedly make their appearances in America's Metropolis, as the French impressario believes that it is possible to do original Negro repertory along the same lines as Eva Le Gallienne is championing for Nordic New York.

The first revue which Mr. Gaugin presents will probably be a very novel bit of work. According to Mr. Morris, the city has not yet been named for the debut of the first Gaugin production.

Race Actors Have Ability To Live Parts, Says Director

Charleston Dancers In Cabaret Scene Make Other Actors Applaud Them

CULVER CITY, Cal.—Unlike his white brother, the Negro actor before the camera is able to live his part, declared Tod Browning, white, who directed the players in "The Big City", a recent Metro-Goldwyn production.

Over one hundred race actors were used in this production with Lon Chaney in furnishing atmosphere for New York gangster life. These extras worked with such enthusiasm that they brought plaudits from star and director. In the cabaret scene the action was so spontaneous that Browning was moved to almost eulogize the actors.

"Indeed," Browning said, "the Negro as a race has the gift of pantomime in the highest degree. They feel keenly and respond to direction quickly, being about the most plastic material I have ever worked with."

Some of the scenes in the picture included dances suggesting the origin of the Charleston. The wild cavorting of some of the dancers in their vaudeville turns brought the spectators to their feet in applause.

Metro-Goldwyn management states that worth is the one merit considered, having given Carolyn Snowden an important part in "In Old Kentucky" along with a hundred other extras.

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NINE MORE PLAYS ENLIVEN THE FALL DRAMATIC SEASON

"Porgy" Begins the Theatre Guild Season With an American Folk-Tale—Our Dramas Set Up Abroad

By J. BROOKS ATKINSON.

LAST year the Theatre Guild inaugurated its new season with a ponderous German importation, entitled "Juarez and Maximilian." This year it begins with a swirling American tale of negro-life in the slums of Charleston—"Porgy," dramatized by Dorothy and DuBose Heyward from Mr. Heyward's finely wrought novel of two seasons ago. Although the critical poltroons may grumble a little over the unwieldiness of this flaring negro rag-show, they must agree that the Guild is fulfilling its special function in the American theatre when it experiments with such indigenous (or autochthonous, as scholars are required to say) material. Excepting Paul Green's "In Abraham's Bosom" (still to be seen in the Village) and "Earth," put on by those very "revolting playwrights" last Winter, and O'Neill's more specialized "All God's Chillun Got Wings," the American negro has never been presented on the stage in quite the same fashion as a racial entity, without the artificial approach of a thesis or theatrical plot. In every respect "Porgy" belongs to the Theatre Guild. Last year the Guild put on two plays by Sidney Howard and one by S. N. Behrman; in addition to the current piece by Mr. and Mrs. Heyward it will display at least one of the unproduced O'Neill dramas this season. And so the common criticism that the Guild does nothing for the American drama begins to lose its pertinence. The Guild is still the most vigorous influence in the American theatre.

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IN these pontifical columns a week ago libelous phrases were uttered about the literary man who invades the sanctity of the theatre. "Porgy" is not trenchant or symmetrical enough as a play to make a flippant criticaster gulp down all his words, but it does come off well in the theatre. The drama retains most of the story although in different proportions. Porgy, the crippled negro beggar, shoots craps in Catfish Alley, blossoms under the strange ministrations of Bess, stabs Crown, her lanky master, as he tries to slip in at the window, escapes the cold vengeance of the law and trundles off in his goat-cart, much as he did in the novel. Here, also, are the hobbledehoy niggers who swarm childishly through his alley—Maria, the stentorian pagan; Jake, the fishing fleet captain; Sporting Life, the slick dealer in "happy dust"; Serena, the pious Christian; Simon Frazier, the fake lawyer; Alan Archdale, the paternal white attorney, and multitudinous neighbors, fishermen, children, stevedores and Jenkin's blurting orphanage band with flaming uniforms. Like high-spirited children they scamper over their three-story tenements, melt away mysteriously before the law, shiver with every blast of a furious, snarling hurricane and intone the deep, elemental rhythms of negro spirituals. The play does not tear the details of the novel rudely apart.

Usually novels are verbose and diffuse in comparison with the slender architecture of a play. But Mr. Heyward wrote his novel so economically—employing the neatly woven style typical of a poet dabbling in prose—that the play seems this time to be the looser medium. Instead of dominating the story, Porgy becomes one aspect of it in a negro hippodrome on the Guild stage where fifty-three Harlem actors communicate the flavor of life in Catfish Alley. "Porgy" as a play rarely dwindles to vivid acting between two or three characters. Usually the background teems with scrambling children and neighbors. And they cannot be swept across the stage and up the stairs to their rooms effortlessly; the mass movements are usually sluggish. Furthermore, the points that were so easy to express in a crisp paragraph in the novel become rather blunted in this huge production. In the novel, for example, Mr. Heyward could define the change in Porgy's life after Bess had come to him with a simple description of facts: The change in Porgy, which Peter had been the first to notice, was now apparent to all who knew him. The defensive barrier of reserve that he had built about his life was down. The long hours when he used to sit fixed and tense, with the look of introspection upon his face, were gone. Even the most skeptical of the women were beginning to admit that Bess was making him a good mate. Not that they mingled freely with the other residents of the court. On the contrary, they seemed strangely sufficient unto themselves in the midst of the intensely gregarious life that was going on about them. Porgy's earnings were adequate to their modest needs, and Bess was always up and out with the first of the women, and among them all there was none who could bargain more shrewdly with the fishermen and hucksters who sold their wares on the wharf.

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IN the play, however, there is not time enough to make all these minor points graphically; rather are they indicated while the phantasy swirls on. As far as Porgy himself is concerned, the novel is the [illegible] medium. Those latitudinarians who are tiresome enough to be interested in such fine points as novel and dramatic construction will discover in "Porgy" a good many provocative details.

On the stage "Porgy" is ruder, deeper, franker, coarser than it is between book covers. For the acting of negroes generally expresses those qualities of elemental human nature. The play does not set off individual acting in high perspective, as "In Abraham's Bosom" did. It runs more to an exposition of group psychology with its weird melody singing over the body of a murdered crapshooter, its breath-taking screams at a vulture hovering near, its incantations, its comic interludes and its heavy mass rhythms. One may fairly wish that the performance revealed a finer sense of rhythmic movement, with better modulated transitions between the passive and the active scenes, or that the waits between scenes were less disenchanting. Most of the more pretentious Theatre Guild productions are played much too slowly. But there is strength and substance in "Porgy." It is an illuminating chronicle of American folklore. In producing it the Guild keeps the faith with its subscribers and friends who look to it for leadership, even for pioneering, in modern drama.

American Drama Overseas.

ACCORDING to advices from London the invasion of American productions, unprecedented during the last two or three years, is not altogether a gift from the gods to the English. Many of our most popular plays find less enthusiastic audiences abroad. "Broadway" succeeded in London, but less sensationally than in New York. "Abie's Irish Rose" and "The Butter and Egg Man" had cold receptions. "An American Tragedy" and "The Great God Brown" were generally disliked. "Seventh Heaven" and "Oh, Kay!" received mixed comment after their premières. Of the recent importations only "The Silver Cord" has been warmly received. Three weeks ago the following American productions were current on the London stage: "Peggy-Ann," "The Desert Song," "Seventh Heaven," "Oh, Kay!" "The Silver Cord" and "The Vagabond King." Two contemporary English plays are now on New York stages, "The Letter" and "Dracula," and "Interference" will be displayed Tuesday night. "Yellow Sands," an unusual English success, failed here a few weeks ago.

As a rule, the American musical plays appear to be living most happily in London; and we, in turn, flock to the English dramas. Last year "The Constant Wife" and "The Constant Nymph" found as many friends in New York as they did in London. The exchange of drama between England and America is obviously very rapid at present, like the exchange of books, ideas and contemporary life in general. Most of the failures result from attempting to exchange plays that are purely local in their manners and allusions. Plays based upon ideas, like "The Silver Cord," can be transported intact. And musical plays, which have no relation to time or space, are for the most part interchangeable when the tunes are pleasing and when the librettos are not too smartly sophisticated.

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DISCUSSING the situation in THE TIMES Dramatic Section last Sunday, Charles Morgan wrote from London: "What we want to know and what we should like the stage to tell us is, what the best of America is thinking on social, political or philosophical subjects. What would greatly please us is a serious study of contemporary manners in America, whether in the North or in the South. Why should we be given an exclusive diet of chorus girls and criminals? Why should we be perpetually shouted at in a language which is not the language of civilized America and is as strange to cultivated Americans that we meet over here as it is to us? Let us have, not 'stunts' which are amusing once, but [illegible]lous in repetition, but truth in comedy or tragedy."

Curiously enough, Mr. Morgan's comment applies almost as lucidly to the American drama in New York as it does to the American fare now hawked along the London highways. We, too, would enjoy learning about American thought from the dynamic pulpit of the theatre; and a serious study of contemporary manners in America would be extraordinarily stimulating, as one of them has been for several months in "Saturday's Children." Like theatregoers in the large cities all over the world, New Yorkers are frivolous; they tread on one another's toes at all the good farces and melodramas. Some of our dramatists, like Sidney Howard, write vigorously about ideas, and some of them, like George Kelly, depict manners with pitiless fidelity to the facts. But most of them are satisfied with knocking together a clever entertainment that goes. We may, if we choose, complain that the American stage is too preponderantly trivial; but theatregoing would be something of a burden if all our plays were serious-minded. Light, ephemeral entertainment has always been the chief joy of the theatre in every period of its history.

In one respect the taste of American theatregoers differs widely from that of the English. Farces rattling with the grotesque absurdities of current slang please us enormously, for they express vividly a certain quality of American high spirits. "Is Zat So?" "The Butter and Egg Man" and now "The Shannons of Broadway" are to us not crude or forced, but uncommonly enjoyable. For even the highly cultivated American understands the rapid give-and-take suggested by these comedies and he relishes the tang of brisk American life that seeps through the patter of their slang. It is difficult to understand why such pieces, so peculiarly American, should ever be sent to foreign

shores; they are patently for local trade.

Incidentally, according to H. T. Parker in The Boston Transcript, "The Charm School" and "Adam and Eva," once current in this town, have recently graced the boards in Vienna. Reinhardt has "The Second Man" in his drawer. And, of course, "The Circus Princess" and "The Play's the Thing" delight audiences there as much as their American adaptations [illegible] New York.

Rose McClendon, the Negro Actress Who Has Been Seen Here in "Deep River" and "In Abraham's Bosom," and Who Is Now One of the Players in the Theatre Guild's Production of "Porgy."

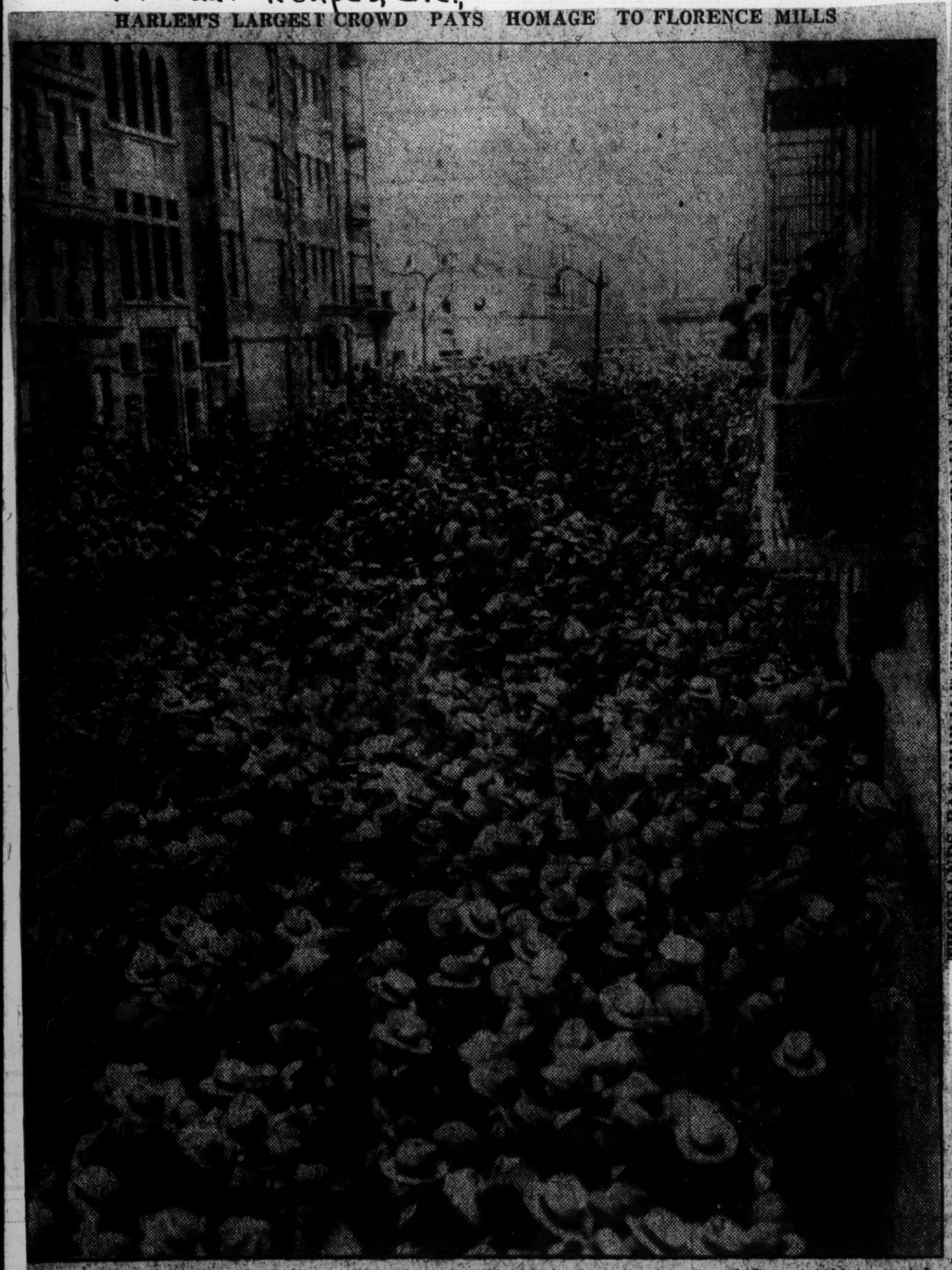
Times 10-16-27

Theatrical – 1927

Individual Tronpes, etc.,

Florence Mills.

HARLEM'S LARGEST CROWD PAYS HOMAGE TO FLORENCE MILLS



THIS IS part of the crowd that gathered to see Harlem's favorite singer and dancer laid to rest last Sunday. International Newsreel Photo

THOUSANDS PAY HOMAGE TO FLORENCE MILLS, LATE WORLD FAMOUS ENTERTAINER

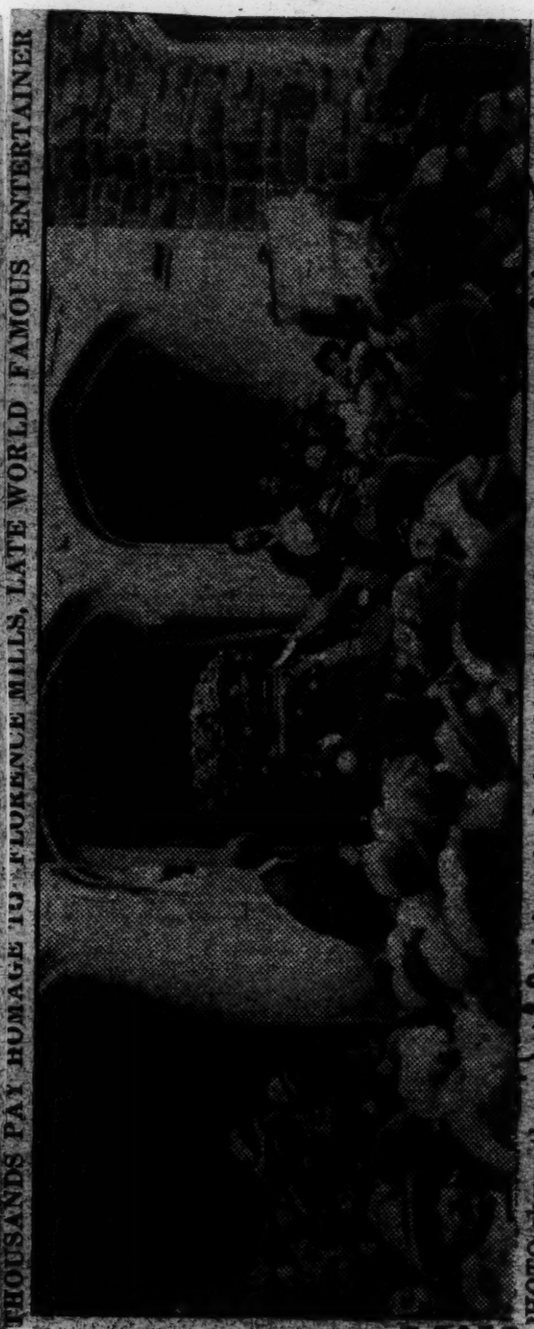


PHOTO shows the casket containing the body of Florence Mills, being carried down the church while thousands of admirers battle to get a glimpse of the Little Singer's casket. International Newsreel Photo

Florence Mills

IT IS HARD to realize that Florence Mills is dead. This is not because she was an artist, a singer, a dancer though she sang and danced her way into the hearts of millions. It is because she embodied in her slim frame something more precious than art, or song, or dancing—the divine elixir of personality. People did not go just to hear her sing and see her dance; they went to see Florence Mills. Amsterdam News

OTHERS could sing as well, or dance as well, but they had not the spark, the snap, the tingle that went with everything she did. Even had her technique been less finished than it was she would have succeeded just the same. She worked hard and courageously, but in addition she had that elusive, indefinable something that distinguishes the genius from the ordinary performer. That quality is a direct gift from God; it cannot be trained or educated into an artist and when given it cannot be taken away save by death. 11-9-27

TO SEE Florence Mills perform was an adventure. No one who ever saw her will forget her large, snappy eyes, her restless feet, and her electric way of smacking the palm of her hand with her fist. In the words of the English writer, she "burned with a gem-like flame," and the genius in her consumed her slender body. And now, only a little more than thirty, at the height of her fame, she is gone. As was said of Aida Overton Walker:

New York N.Y.

What care the fates for genius rare?
Brute death derides our need and woe;
The fairest flowers of the field
Are yet the first to go.

FLORENCE MILLS did more than give pleasure to millions; she made the world a better place for the Negro to live in. Like Roland Hayes, Paul Dunbar and others she taught the world that the Negro has something rich to give it. She served her country as well as her race, and in a way that is not generally realized. It is not too much to say that her popu-

larity in Paris helped to soften anti-American feeling in France.

Some worthy memorial should be erected to keep alive the memory of Florence Mills. The Amsterdam News suggests that it take the form of a home for aged or infirm actors and actresses. All of them are doing their part to create a better feeling the world toward the Negro.

IN NEW YORK TOWN

By GERALDYN DISMOND

(Exclusive to The Bee in Chicago)

FLORENCE MILLS

At the Nation's Capital, a fitting birthplace for a queen, Florence Mills was born 32 years ago. Tiny, big eyed and sunny, she was the pride of her three sisters and brohters and doting parents, and early showed an aptitude for the stage. When she was only three years old her greatest pleasure was to be allowed to go on amatur nights to the Bijou theatre, where she sang in a wee, small voice and gave an exhibition cake walk. She immediately became so popular that the amount of money showered on her by the enthusiastic audience helped materially in the upkeep of the family, and she had medals for playthings.

When about seven, the team of Benito and Hearn which was playing the Eastern Burlesque circuit, took her along as a "pick" to do her singing and dancing stunt, and fortwith began her real career. It was Miss Benito who induced the family to move to New York and introduced the young Florence to New York managers. At first she sang around at various benefit performances, but it was not long before Cecil McPherson had booked her for a schoolroom bit to play opposite Andrew Tribble. Then followed performances at Keith Proctor and Loew houses until she was 17 years old, at which time she decided to quit the stage in order to attend school regularly.

Shortly thereafter she formed a trio with her two sisters, and the three Mills girls escorted by their mother, played houses as far south as Jacksonville, Fla. On her return to New York, she married James Randolph and formed an act with Kinky Clark, protege of Buddy Gilmore and started west. It was with this outfit that she reached Chicago. At that time cabarets were at their height and the attractive Florence became the most popular of night club enertainers. She made Panama at 35th and State streets famous and was nothing short of a sensation.

In 1917 she formed the Panama Trio—Cora Green, later of Dancer and Green and Harrington and Green, Ada Smith, better known as Bricktop and head of her own European night club, and Florence Mills. They played a short engagement opening at the Grand theatre, but Miss Mills left to join the Tennessee Ten, a big time act which was playing at the Majestic in Chicago and was booked for New York. She remained with them until the following year when she returned to Chicago to entertain at the Pekin and Dreamland.

During the war she reorganized the Panama Trio, with Carolyn Williams in the place of Bricktop and played the Pantages circuit. When the act reached the west, Carolyn Williams for some reason decided to quit and the panic-stricken Florence rushed to Alexander Pantages himself. That gentleman quickly told her that it made not the slightest difference who quit as long as she stayed. So Mills and Green finished the season as a double. She later joined the Tennessee Ten and met Ulysses Thompson, "The Slow Kid," to whom they had ten married. In addition to playing all the leading houses they had ten weeks at the Columbia at 47th and Broadway. She appeared for the last time with the Tennessee Ten at the Alhambra in Harlem.

Miss Mills then entertained for a few weeks at Barron's exclusive club and when Gertrude Saunders pulled out of "Shuffle Along" she filled the vacancy and was there discovered by Lew Leslie, who took her to open the Plantation, atop the Winter Garden. Her name blazed on Broadway and her success was made. The Plantation became a by-word for the cleverest amusement, the most sophisticated patrons and the most enchanting entertainer. Far and wide traveled the news of the little colored girl who was the first to have her name in lights on Broadway.

Early the following season her revue, "Dixie to Dover Street," opened at the London Pavilion for a four months engagement. On her return to America she reopened the Plantation and also appeared downstairs in the Winter Garden's famous "Greenwich Village Follies." Her new revue, "Dixie to Broadway," played from August to May without the loss of a week or a single day's pay, and was one of her greatest successes. She next took out a vaudeville act of ten girls and her own band and started out with two weeks at the Hippodrome and followed with 15 weeks of big time for Keith and Orpheum. When she reached Keith's Palace on Broadway, she had the distinction of being the first colored single to be a headliner.

Then she went back to the Plantation with her last revue "Blackbirds," which later played the Alhambra for five weeks and broke all records. On May 15 she sailed for Paris to open an exclusive club which had been especially built for her revue and would cater to the best people of Europe. She was booked for four weeks but it was twelve weeks before the French would relinquish her. She then jumped to Belgium, played Ostend, came to Paris, and from there moved to the London Pavilion for a nine months run. Her last stands were Glasgow, Manchester, Liverpool, Baden Baden, Vienna, Prague and Berlin.

Before sailing for America on the Ile de France she had her picture snapped with Mayors Walker of New York, and Hendricks of Philadelphia, while reviewing the American Legion abroad. On board the Ile de France she made her last public appearance, when to do her bit toward relieving the tedium of the trip, she sang "Mandy," "Smiling Joe" and "Blackbird."

In Paris, she told her friends that she had put off having an operation but would go through with it on reaching home. For months she had worked against the greatest physical odds and many a night in the wings would carefully wipe away the tears of pain and greet her audience with a smile. But she would keep on; she could not bear to leave her company in the lurch. She had the greatest assurance of recovery and was considering offers from Al Woods, Ziegfield, a concert tour, and a trip around the world.

She died at the age of 32 and in the heyday of her sucess. Always sweet, always and bit shy and reserved, she was adored by all who came in contact with her. She was devoid of temperament, could always see the other fellow's side, and made excuses for everybody. But she was extremely sensitive and if scolded would cry for days. Florence Mills was never in a chorus. She started and ended as a star. Her greatest pride was that she never gave her manager a moment's trouble and was always on time.

Theatrical-1927 I. Florence Mills.
Individual Troupes, etc.

150,000 THRONG HARLEM TO PAY LAST TRIBUTE AND HONOR TO DAINTY STAR, FLORENCE MILLS

All Ranks and Races Join In Mourning the Passing Of The Race's Most Distinguished Stage Artist And City Witnesses Greatest Outpouring In Race's History--Floral Offerings Make Wonderful Display--Circling Planes Release Blackbird, And Roses

The sun shone with fitful splendor Sunday, November 6, as thousands of all races and ranks thronged Harlem streets and avenues for the paying of the last tribute of love and admiration to the dainty little comedienne, singer and dancer—Florence Mills—whose talent, grace and winsome sweetness had won for her a place on the very topmost rung of the Ladder of Fame!

The tiny body, almost lot to sight in its swathings of shimmering silk and spidery web lace, as it lay in the massive casket of hand-hammered bronze, said to be a replica of the casket in which the body of Rudolph Valentino, the famous moving picture star, was laid, had been viewed by thousands, white and black, old and young, celebrities and nonetities, during the week day on which it had lain in state in the chapel of the Howell Undertaking Parlors at 137th street and Seventh avenue.

50,000 Viewed The Body.

The original program, limiting the viewing of the body to the hours between 2 and 10 p. m., was quickly found inadequate, and so the doors were opened an hour earlier, and only closed when the last figure in the seemingly never-ending procession had passed the bier—in some instances, as late as 2 and 3 o'clock the next morning. It was estimated that between 50,000 and 60,000 people passed through the undertaking parlors. During this period, a constant guard of honor was maintained by members of the Colored Vaudeville Benevolent Association, detailed by Bob Slater, secretary.

This vigil was maintained even through Sunday morning, up to the hour of leaving for the funeral service.

And that other thousands who had been unable to view the body in the undertaking parlors might have an opportunity to pay tribute to the dead artist, the funeral procession was routed to pass through Seventh avenue to 125th street, thence through to Lenox avenue, and up that thoroughfare to 137th street to the church. And both avenues were thronged with a silent host that stood in awed reverence awaiting the coming of the cortege. 150,000 was estimated by experienced onlookers as the number filling streets and houses.

The funeral march was headed by the Mi-Tee Monarch Band, under leadership of Lieut. Fred W. Simpson, and its playing of sacred hymn tunes appropriate to the occasion was a striking feature. A uniformed group of the lodge members formed an escort, following the band, and then nine automobiles, laden with the most extensive and gorgeous floral display Harlem has ever seen. An immense bleeding heart, made of deep red roses, with broad white satin ribbons fluttering from the top, was the tribute sent by U. S. ("Slow Kid") Thompson, the devoted and adoring husband of Florence Mills. This filled the first machine.

A British Tribute.

Another floral offering that attracted much interest was a vast tower of red roses, four feet broad, eight feet high, which bore the simple inscription, "From a Friend." All that was known of its source was that cabled instructions came two days ago from London for its presentation, and there was a persistent report to the effect that the Prince of Wales, who was a pronounced admirer of Florence Mills' art, and had visited her show in London thirteen times, had sent it.

Another tremendous piece, a "Gates Ajar," built with a great variety of flowers, came from Harry Wills, the famous pugilist, and there were offerings from a number of friends in London, including Johnny Nit, the dancer, who was with the "Blackbirds," and is now in England with the "White Birds"; from the White and Colored Variety Artists, London, Jackson and Blake; from Lady

Mary Cooke; from Charles B. Cochran, the English promoter; from John Payne, American singer now in London, and from scores and scores of managers, producers, actors and actresses of all degrees of fame and standing, and from men and women in all walks of life.

Immediately behind the nine machines bearing the flowers, came the hearse. The casket was covered with a huge blanket of red and white roses, said to have been sent by Lew Leslie, who was Florence Mills' manager, and the eighteen flower girls followed bearing each floral pieces of various appropriate shapes. The final one was a towering sheaf of lilies of the valley, and this was laid on top of the rose blanket on the casket.

Girls In Sober Gray.

The flower girls were Bertha Weinglass, Lillian Powell, Adelaide Hall, Evelyn Shepherd, Fanny Powell, Hyacinth Curtis, Mae Fanning, Rose Singleton, Billie Cain, Zelma Davis, Essie Worth, Vivian Harris, Pearl McCormick, Marion Tyler, Ethel Moses, Lucia Moses, Ruth Johnson.

Then came the honorary pallbearers, a group of actresses, including Edith Wilson, Cora Green, Evelyn Preer, Gertrude Saunders, Ada Ward, Maude Russell, Lena Wilson and Ethel Waters.

The flower girls and honorary pallbearers were garbed alike in gray crepe de chine costumes, with gray silk stockings and black pumps, the pall bearers wearing also close-fitting gray hats. The flower girls were bareheaded.

The active pallbearers were men of high rank in the musical and theatrical world. They were William H. Vodery, J. Flourney Miller, Aubrey Lyles, Dewey Weinglass, Hamtree Harrington, George Rickson, James Marshall and Leonard Harper.

When the funeral procession finally reached 137th street, it found that street, from Lenox to Seventh avenues, a solid block of seething milling humanity. The spectator who had a vantage point in window or on roof gazed down upon an unbroken human carpet upon which one could verily have walked from corner to corner. The original force of policemen, under Capt. Emil Pierne of the 16th Precinct had long since found itself unable to cope with the situation, and additional reserves had been sent to the scene. The people had begun to assemble a searly as 8 o'clock.

Police Had Hard Task.

And the officers had their task cut out for them in trying to make a passage way for the funeral party. Finally, it was necessary for the police to use their flivvers as battering rams, forcing the people back into congested masses on either side, forming a passage through which the cortege finally made is way to the church entrance.

The church auditorium, with a normal seating capacity of 2400 was jammed with at least 3,000 people, who occupied every available inch of space. The flower girls, following the casket as it was borne by the pallbearers, piled their floral burdens about the altar and around the casket, and soon the air in the building was heavy [illegible] from the floral mass.

The pastor, the Rev. James W. Brown, D.D., conducted the religious service. An orchestra of selected musicians, directed by Allie Ross, played the Chopin "Funeral March" as the body was borne up the aisle, the preacher intoning the scriptural passage, "I am the Way and the Life." As the strains of the "Funeral March" died away the great organ, with Dr. Melville Charlton at the console, pealed forth the mournful hymn of consolation, "Come, ye disconsolate," sung by the regular choir of Mother Zion Church. The spoken part of the service was brief. Dr Brown prayed, read a short history of the life of Florence Mills, and then eloquently eulogized her. "The race has sustained a great loss, the theatrical profession has lost its brightest star," he said. The minister told of the "sunshine" thousands had enjoyed through Florence Mills' gracious art, ad of her dignity and poise and helpfulness to others.

Impressive Choral Singing.

The remainded of the program was devoted to musical numbers, the most impressive, perhaps, being the singing of "Deep River" and "I'm a pilgrim of sorrow," two Spirituals, by the Carolina Choir, directed by Hall Johnson. The voices of the group blended with an unusual approach to tonal perfection, and the vast crowd was deeply impressed.

Other musical numbers included "Face to face" by Louise Howard; "Flee as a bird" by Augustus A. Haston; "Lead, Kindly Light" by Julius Bledsoe; "Come unto me" from Handel's "Messiah" by Jessica Zackery; "Florence," an original song, composed and sung by Juanita Stinnette; "I know that my Redeemer liveth" from Handel's "Messiah" by Louetta Chatman; and "Thou wilt keep her in perfect peace" by Clarence Tisdale.

During the service, Jesse Shipp, who was in charge of the program aside from the purely religious section, read extracts from numerous cablegrams and telegrams which had been received from many of the most distinguished men and women in civil, political, stage and music life, both in America and Europe. Intimate and affectionate messages came from friends and former stage associates, and there were messages of sympathetic condolence from admirers of Florence Mills' art.

Frank Gillmore, executive secretary of the Actors' Equity Association, wrote William Harrigan, at the Hotel Belvedere, saying:

> **"We know how deeply her people feel the death of Miss Florence Mills. We also share their grief because she was a great artist of the stage."**

and named Mr. Harrigan as the official representative of the Actors' Equity Association.

Noted Men Pay Tribute.

Mayor James J. Walker wired: "We have lost a great artist." Former Mayor John F. Hylan regretted the death of "Your brilliant and distinguished daughter."

David Belasco "admired her for her great ability," and Charles B. Cochran cabled that "All London joins myself, my wife and those who were privileged to know dear Florence, in mourning and loving sympathy." Zit, editor of "Zit's Weekly," is "thankful for the beautiful memory" she left and Mrs. Mary McLeod Bethune, president of the National Federation of Colored Women, regrets the "passing of this youthful star who has done so much to glorify art in our race."

Lady Mary Cook of London, known to American artists as "Mother Cook" for her interest in their welfare, cabled "deepest sympathy and love in this terrible grief." Al H. Woods ,famous producer, "cannot tell in words how the loss of dear Florence has shocked me," and B. S. Moss, head of a chain of motion picture and vaudeville houses; Paul Whiteman, the noted orchestra leader, Archie and Edgar Selwyn and Belle Baker express deepest sympathy. Archie Selwyn added, "I feel the stage has lost one of its greatest artists."

The Executive Committee, Variety Artistes Federation of England through its secretary, Fred Herbert, cabled a unanimous vote of condolence to the husband and relatives "on untimely death of our member, Florence Mills."

service personal. It was announced that Juanita Stinnette of the team of Stinnette and Chappelle, would give an original song, "Florence," dedicated to the dead star.

Facing toward the coffin Mrs. Stinnette began in a voice which was hardly audible. "Florence!" each short stanza began. Each time she raised her voice a little higher and threw more of feeling into the appeal. As the crowd stirred and a few persons rose to their feet it became a frantic cry, "Florence!" The singer swayed, but struggled on to the climax. "The hours you spent for us—Florence!" She threw back her arms, screamed, and collapsed into a heap upon the floor.

Outside the door a great wail arose, penetrated by a shrill cry.

The final prayers were said. Then the body was borne out, while 150 policemen and several police cars bored a narrow lane. Shortly after four o'clock the procession started on its way to Woodlawn Cemetery. Eventually, her friends plan, the body of Florence Mills will lie in a $25,000 mausoleum, before which will stand a life-sized statue of her as "the Blackbird."

Theatrical-1928.

Individual Troupes, etc.,

Paul Robeson Has Joined the Cast of "Porgy" at the Republic. You Should Be Able to Find Him, Without Undue Trouble, in the Group Above.

"PORGY" COMING BACK; STRINDBERG, MONDAY

The Theatre Guild production "Porgy," which had been playing on Broadway since November, and which closed at the Republic Theatre last Saturday is returning to New York early in June. The Negro folk play by Dorothy and Du Bose Heyward is making a short tour. The production is playing in Boston this week, where it will remain a fortnight. Following this the tour will take in the cities of Washington, Detroit and Cincinnati.

"Porgy" was to have been presented this summer in Germany under the sponsorship of Max Reinhardt, who saw it here two months' ago, but the tour to Europe will wait a bit—at least until New Yorkers have had another view of the play, and the other American cities are visited.

During its final week here, "Porgy" did almost capacity business, which was a big surprise, considering the lengthy run of the play.

Josephine Baker Wins Prague

Prague, April 24.—(By A. N. P.)—Never before in the history of this city has a performer received the acclaim accorded Josephine Baker upon her arrival here Wednesdy to begin a ten-day engagement at a local cabaret. The little Paris dancer, who created such a sensation in Vienna, was met at the train by a multitude of admirers and was literally swept off of her feet.

Hours before she arrived the crowd began to gather and when she was sighted there was a general rush in her direction and so anxious were the members of the crowd to see her several women were injured in the rush. Miss Baker was forced to take refuge upon the top of a limousine, from which she smiled and waved to the shouting multitude.

The public would not permit her to go to her hotel until she had first driven around the city in an automobile. Everywhere she went there was a crowd to greet her and the cheering was deafening.

Miller And Lyles' Comedy Produced By Old Formula

"Keep Shufflin" Successor To "Shuffle Along," Says Metropolitan Critic

NEW YORK—Classing Miller and Lyles as the race's funniest comedians in one of the funniest scenes produced, Robert J. Sisk, white, writing in the Sunday New York World, declares that humor with the two funsters is simply an old formula.

The best comedians, according to Sisk, are funniest when they start out poor and later become rich. This formula, the critic writes, is used by Miller and Lyles in all their shows.

The writer says of the pair's work:

Equal Got League

"It is a scene in which the head men of the Equal Got League—an organization formed by two lazy gentlemen to get rich—reach the peak of their wealth. Where poverty had stared them in the face and where they were lucky to have fried hominy and scrapple for Sunday dinner, they walk home to find the table set with a leg of lamb, peas, pickles, hot coffee and other ordinary delights.

They Are Indignant

"Instantly there is indignation.

"They are now loaded with money. They regard it and their indignation mounts:

"'Is this rich man's food? No. Throw it out.'".

"Out it goes.'"

"The eyes fall on the wall clock. 'Is that a rich man's clock? Throw it out.'"

"The carpet, furniture, pictures and other household furnishings are viewed. They are not, it seems, the proper accoutrements to the home of a rich man and so, in as knockabout a scene as you'd want to see outside of battle royal, they are thrown out the window.

A Crisis Arises

"Noise accompanies all this, plus the lamentation of the family, which understands not the reason. But the head of the house is rolling in wealth; his league to see that every one in Jimtown has 'got equal' seems to have succeeded, even if it did require the dynamiting of a bank to assure this universal success.

"It is only when messengers return, reporting that all the storekeepers, too, have become so wealthy that they have shut up shop and won't sell anything, that the brethren appear in a dilemma. This, too, is funny, but the really hilarious moment is when the meek and humble poor man is transformed into a domineering rich gentleman— so rich that thousand dollar bills—yea, even million dollar bills—exude from the pockets.

"Thus it was in Rang Tang and thus it is in their new show, which is called Keep Shufflin' and which is obviously designed as a successor to the remarkably successful Shuffle Along of recent fame."

Comedians Partners For Quarter Century

Harlem will pay tribute Saturday night, when Flournoy E. Miller and Aubrey Lyles are tendered a silver jubilee ball at Harlem Casino in honor of their stage partnership of a quarter century.

Extensive plans have been laid for entertainment of the entertainers and three specialty artists from the team's present vehicle, "Keep Shufflin'," will head the group. They are Honey Brown, Billy Yarbo and Jean Starr. Three bands will play for the dancers.

Celebrities Patrons

Broadway and Harlem will turn out to honor the comedians. Julius Bledsoe, barytone with Ziegfeld's "Showboat" and Abbie Mitchell, singer and actress, now playing in "Coquette", are listed among the patrons.

NEW YORK HERALD
MAY 20 1928

Home-Town Church Will Be First Stop On Bledsoe's Tour

Negro Star in "Show Boat" Will Give Concert for His "Own People" in Waco

Jules Bledsoe, Negro barytone and one of the stars of Ziegfeld's "Show Boat," has received an offer from a group of Texans to make a concert tour of that state. If the proposed tour does not conflict with his engagement in "Show Boat," he is prepared to accept, but——

His first appearance in Texas will not be in any elaborate concert hall. Instead, it will be in a little brick church on North Sixth Street in the Negro district of Waco—and he will sing for his own people and the old grandmother who raised him.

The little edifice is known as the New Hope Baptist Church. It was built by Bledsoe's grandfather, the Rev. Stephen Cobb, in 1860. It was there that Bledsoe received his early religious training and acquired the urge to take up music. His ambition was to become a singer, but his grandparents, with whom he made his home, persuaded him to take up medicine. Upon graduation from high school, Bledsoe came East and registered in the medical school at Columbia University. In order to pay his way through college, he obtained vaudeville engagements during the summer months, and it was there that he first attracted the attention of the Broadway managers.

"The American Negro always has occupied a conspicuous place in the drama; plays have been fashioned around him; he has been dramatized and re-dramatized, and yet, until a few years ago, he was revealed on the stage solely through the medium of a white actor."

Bledsoe, a giant of a man, stood in the wings of the Ziegfeld Theater as he spoke, idly watching an army of scene-shifters throw together a "set" that would, in a moment more, be a waterfront scene on the Mississippi. Up went the curtain—the scene had started. Half a hundred colored actors and actresses, singers and dancers, let loose a bedlam of sound.

"White actors couldn't duplicate that scene," said Bledsoe. "They couldn't duplicate it because they couldn't feel it. The Negro possesses a freedom of emotion—an ability to be utterly happy—that whites do not have."

The fact that the Negro characters in "Show Boat" differ entirely from those found in Harlem has nothing to do with the case, according to Bledsoe. He watched the gyrations of a mulatto girl in a vivid costume of red and yellow.

"That is inherent in her," he said. "She may not understand the Southern Negro, but she understands that rhythmic frenzy, because it's born in her."

Churches of Harlem, as well as cabarets and revues, contributed the Negro actors to "Show Boat." As a matter of fact, practically all of the colored singers in the production are members of church choirs. Likewise, practically all of the dancers learned their profession in the shows headed by the late Florence Mills.

Florence Mills is to them what Marilyn Miller is to the average white chorus girl. To occupy the niche that Florence Mills held during her career is the ambition of them all.

10,000 ROAR WELCOME TO "SMILING SAMMY"

Atlantic City Gives Frenzied Welcome To Cross-Country Runner Saturday

HAD NO TRAINERS

Plucky Youngster, Eulogized By Friends, Tells Of Prayer

ATLANTIC CITY, N. J. — Zooming airplanes, shrieking sirens, clanging fire bells, honking autos, women's screams, men's husky-throated "at-a-boy, Sammy", is just a wee bit of description of the biggest public demonstration for a single individual in the history of Atlantic City.

As the 1:18 pulled in from New York a sea of human forms blocked the big iron horse of the special Penn train, men and women crowded to get a glimpse of the boy who treaked from California to Madison Square Garden. Police and firemen and public safety guards were swept aside. Finally brave member of the Elks of which Sammy is one, literally walked on the heads and shoulders of the crowd, picked Sammy from the platform and carried him to Mayor Ruffu's car.

Sammy Greets All

News photographers skinned telegraph poles, scaled walls, stood upon moving autos to catch Sammy's famous smile. Old, young and indifferent, all screaming "Hello Sammy". From every point Sammy, who has a remarkable memory, recognized persons by sight or voice.

Didn't Forget To Pray

Down at 1700 block, Sammy called to the Rev. Perry, that his prayers brought him home, and that he (Sammy) did a lot of praying himself. As the throng marched out Kentucky to the Soldiers' Home, onlookers smashed several windows in order to get a full glimpse of Smiling Sam. The only thing to compare to this demonstration was the announcement of the Armistice. At the Soldiers' Home, Mayor Ruffu welcomed, in behalf of Atlantic City, the Press Union entrant.

Had No Trainers

Lou Greenberg, sports editor and backer of Sammy, recalled the days when he and Sammy played football together. When Sammy applied on the high school football squad there was serious objection. Greenberg was captain, so he put Samy on. To-day Lou Greenberg is the star of adoration of all colored Atlantic City. Greenberg said that any man who could run across the continent without trainers and assistants, deserved the highest praise. Other speakers were H. E. McLeod, representing the Negro Press; Mrs. Naomi Young, representing the women; Richard Allen, of the Mayor's office; Dr. Wilson, of the Elks; Officer Allmond, J. C. Johnson, Ferdinand Motley, Pete Sawyer, "Big Boy" Jones.

Sammy Describes Trip

Sammy gave a very graphic description of the trip. He repeatedly referred to his dogs and prayer. There were several big receptions at which large purses will be donated. The Ambassador, where County Leader 'Nucky" stays, raised $400 on Saturday night. Mr. Herdon Daniels presented a check for $100. The Elks, Veterans, the Northside Athletic Club, etc., are preparing to give large sums.

BOOK CHAT

"Appearances" By Garland Anderson

Last night I saw "Appearances" in San Francisco. It is not only the most remarkable play ever written by a Negro in the United States, but is also the most remarkable play ever produced on the subject of the Negro in "freedom". It states the case of the Negro against the mob and the oppressor as no theatre has ever dared to state it before. We all KNOW that when a member of the stronger group wants to get a member of the weaker group to obey the wishes, illegitimate wishes, of the strong, there will be used: first bullying, if that fails, then bribery; if that fails, then "framing." We all KNOW it, but this is the first time any theatre has dared Say it.

The play opens tamely. But immediately the human interest begins to grow and never flags to the very end. Not a "great" play by some measurements, but the most intensely "human" thing, "Abie's Irish Rose" has nothing on "Appearances" for engaging interest,—while the Irish-Catholic play also lacks the tragic theme that wavers and threatens through the incidents of the "Negro-White play.

The play does not have the usual buffonery and tomfoolery that is always called for by the producers of Negro plays. The humor of the ignorant hotel porter is used as a vehicle for getting across the most solid philosophy of interracial relations. When the crooked lawyer charged the porter with having shown his guilt by running away from a pursuing mob, the porter confounds the lawyer by simply remarking that his "innocence" could have done him no good after he was hung to a telegraph pole.

I have seen a lot of Negro-white plays, but Garland Anderson is the first playwright I have seen "get over" a scene on the white-American stage in which a proud white man is made to "take low" before a Negro man, even though this Negro is the porter who had already demonstrated his moral superiority to the white man, who at this juncture in the play had been thoroughly exposed as an educated crook.

This is also a play in which the Negro character is the genuine hero and "triumphs." Other playwrights have had to "apologize," as it were, for showing Negro virtues to the audience, by finally sacrificing the Negro; as if they dared not make him a hero and then permit him to live,—in the sight of white Americans. If the Negro is going to be a hero, he must be finally a dead one,—homage paid by truth to prejudice. That is exactly what "All God's Chillun," "Emperor Jones," "Abraham's Bosom," and all other such plays by white men, have done. Their Negro "heroes" may have good qualities, but their good qualities are all in vain,—for the great white monster will get them,—and the lot of any such Negro must be "defeat." We do not mean that every heroic Negro soul, in real life, must triumph,—but neither do they all fail. And what we mean is, that Garland Anderson is almost the only recent playwright who has had the courage to risk his success on showing the heroic, superior-souled Negro who does not fail.

—WILLIAM PICKENS

Theatrical - 1928.

Individual Troupes, etc.

JOHNNY HUDGINS NEWEST PARIS SENSATION NOW

One Time Baltimore Stage Hand Accepts Contract With Paramount Theatre

MRS. HUDGINS BEST DRESSED PARIS GIRL

Paris Picture Papers Snap Her In The Paddock At Long Champs Races

Continued From Page One

sky-blue velvet trimmed with white satin; blue hat trimmed with satin, and hatband of rhinestones; glittering eyeglasses trimmed with the same; diamond heels, white spats; and a cane of dazzling brilliance. In another scene he appears as the Devil. The cast in all its gorgeousness is assembled on the stage when a number of female imps, his advance guard, dressed as we suppose like ladies in the hot infernal regions dress, come screaming down the stairs, followed by Johnny, who then struts his stuff to the satisfaction of all.

Comic Boxing Match

In another scene he appears with one of the leading white comedians of the cast in a comic boxing match that is the hit of the evening. He is the only Negro in the cast and his intensely black face is quite striking among those hundreds of white ones. But in "Gay Paree" where the color line existeth not, he capers nimbly around with the ladies, dressed as well as undressed. There are several white Americans in the cast, and many, many more in the audience; but as to how they enjoy this part of the evening's entertainment deponent sayeth not, and careth not.

Gold And Brown Dressing Room

During the entra'acte we went to the stage door and presenting our card asked to see Mr. Hudgins and was shown into his beautiful dressing room, which is trimmed in gold and brown, with gold borders, spangled curtains, fine carpets and hangings, big cushions and dolls of the other Parisian stars. Foremost of the many pictures on the walls or on the dressing table were several of Mrs. Hudgins.

Home Is Baltimore

Mr. Hudgins received us cordially, and as the room was warm, one of the very, very few warm places one strikes in Paris during this cold snap, he saw to it that we were properly cooled, inside as well as out. When we asked for some facts about himself he pointed to a large, well-bound scrapbook, and asked us to consult that while he got ready for his next appearance.

Glancing through it one sees that he is a native of Baltimore; that he began his career at the William Daly theatre there pulling the curtain up and letting it down for $5 a week; that he was a hit at the Club Alabama in New York for two years; that he has been featured in big electric signs on Broadway; in Piccadilly, London, and in Paris. One sees where he has been the subject of several lawsuits among managers eager to get his service, one of whom B. C. Whitney wishing to retain him in the "Chocolate Dandies", said that he was "the hit of the show." In the many clippings about his work one runs across such phrases as these:

"The world's greatest pantomime dancer."

Ballbearing Joints

"His oily noiseless feet moved as if he had ballbearing joints."

"Hudgins has created for himself the precedent as the foremost colored actor with his originality, spontaneity and unsurpassing shuffling of feet."

"See Hudgins and one will see what the art of sliding about the stage is. It is true that real art consists in having so much natural genius that you don't have to show it."

"His feet shuffled him into the applause hit of the evening."

All of the above appraisals, except the first, are from leading white journals in America and England.

With Flo Mills

Of his work in "The Blackbirds". "Le Gaulois", one of the Paris dailies said: "The star of the colored revue is Florence Mills. She has the voice, the gracefulness, the distinction, but the comedian, Johnny Hudgins, is certainly the most original attraction of the evening. He is the king of clowns."

But, perhaps, the most striking of all the tributes. Hudgins has received in this from "Snappy Stories", New York: "If the Prince of Wales could dance like that there'd be some reason for the fuss that is made over him."

Coming To U. S. In May

After all of this it is easy to understand his present Paris success, and why many in America and elsewhere are now bidding for his services. The most advantageous of these offers, he says, is from William Morris to play picture houses and he has accepted with him, his first engagement being with the new Paramount Theatre, New York, sometime in May at the close of his present engagement.

Consulting his scrapbook further, one sees that the German, Austrian, and Scandinavian papers have devoted considerable space to him although he has never been in those countries; that he has been caricatured by some of the leading cartoonists of both continents; that he has played before many of the leading European and Asiatic monarchs, the Prince of Wales, and others of the French and English nobility; that he has been leading man with a French movie actress, Mme. Catherine Hesslina, in a ilm that is to appear shortly called:; "Charleston" and more—all in the space of nine years, for Mr. Hudgins is quite a young man, and very modest, in spite of his success.

Homesick In Pittsburgh

When we asked him which of all his stage experiences stands out most in his mind he said that it was his first engagement at the Star Theatre, Wiley Ave., Pittsburgh. "I was singing a song called: 'I Love the Ladies', but I got homesick for my mother and good Maryland fried chicken, so I quietly eased away, paying my way back home with all the money I had—eight dollars." His first appearance, he said, was as an amateur at Ford's Opera House, Baltimore, while still in his teens.

Later at the close of the show we had another chat with Mr. Hudgins, and he gave the impression that although fame has come his way he does not intend to slacken now but to retain it by hard work. He further spoke well of all the colored actors in the European field. We learnt also that he had played the leading part in getting colored performers on certain circuits in America, one of them being the Columbia wheel. He said that he was the first Negro to play with an all-white chorus before him at the Gaiety Theatre in Washington, D. C.; and that while playing at the Columbia Burlesque in Chicago he tried to get other colored people on the wheel but the management thought it would not pay. Later they took his advice and found it did.

Wah-Wah Song

Two other facts show that Johnny Hudgins has really arrived as a Parisian star. The original of his lithograph has found its way into the Jockey Bar, a famous cosmopolitan resort on the Boulevard Montparnasse; and the white performers are imitating his "Wah-Wah" song in the night clubs. On his opening night he received many cablegrams of congratulations from well-known artists, among them being Dorothy Gish and the Four Harmony Kings. Hudgins says that he is taking steps to stop his imitators. "I wouldn't mind," he said, "if they would give me credit, and put my name on their programs, as Josephine Baker has done." In the scrapbook is also a letter from the manager of the Ambassadeurs, who spoke of him in the highest terms, and says he is ready to have him back at any time.

Mrs. Hudgins Dressed

As to Mrs. Hudgins, who was formerly on the stage, she is one of the best dressed women in Paris. And this, like the above, is no stage blarney. In the scrapbook are pictures of her as they appeared in several of the Paris dailies when she was snapped in the paddock of Longchamps at the last Grand Prix. This last is the height of ambition of almost every woman who goes to the Grand Prix, for in addition to being the most famous race of the year it is also the dress parade of this centre of fashion. The elite of Europe is present.

Could such things have happened in a certain other public three thousand miles away? Would Mrs. Hudgins, with all her charm and beauty, ever be noticed? We wonder, we wonder!

In The Renault

Accompanied by Mr. Hudgins' secretary and interpreter, Sidney Garner, of 6 rue du Galais, Mr. and Mrs. Hudgins can be seen from time to time taking a spin along the Champs Elysees or shopping on the Grand Boulevards in their splendid Renault of the latest model.

All of which is a long way from being a page at five dollars a week a little over ten years ago.

FRENCH CRITICISE NEW LONDON PLAY

"Jordan"—Imported From The U. S., Based On Race Motive

"OUR MANNERS BAD"

Whites Hating Blacks Shows Absence Of Morality

By M. CLEMENT VANTAL, white, in Le Journal.—Parisian daily.

"The Americans are broadcasting with lavish hand over all the world, except Montmartre, their sermons of morality. They have given us their virtue, their philanthropy, their physical and moral hygiene, handing it out in the same manner as they do chewing gum.

"Have you noticed? Their latest super-films are mixing more and more circus capers and evangelism. Douglas Fairbanks, himself, is only a brigad during two or three thousand metres of his recent film; long before the end is reached he is converted and becomes a Quaker.

"How could it be otherwise in a country where on the 'table de nuit' in your room in the hotel you find a Bible which is part of the furniture, and where divorced European women are treated as undesirables, no matter how desirable they may be on their own land and where our plays are forbidden because of alleged perversity.

"Evidently these comedies, called Parisian, are sometimes of extreme lightness of manner. And it is not surprising that the Catos of America send them back, bag and baggage by the next steampship.

"But if these kinds of plays shock the nephews of Uncle Sam we have perhaps the rights in Europe to exclaim in listening to certain American plays.

"What manners: How shameful! One simply does not know what to say about people who forget to such an extent the most elementary rules of moral conduct!

"They are going to play in London a play imported from New York, entitled, 'Jordan'. Here is the story:

"A blind young woman directs in the southern states a number of plantations. She has for assistant a young man called Jordan. He has a musical voice and is very aimable, proof of which is that his mistress is not long falling in love with him. However, she would quickly be disgusted with him could she see him because he is a Negro. Oh! he is very light in color! Just a drop of coffee in a bowl of milk. Nevertheless, that is a terrible deficiency. Jordan would be thrust away with horror if he ever admitted that he was not pure white. So as he loves the girl he hides his "infamy", and the marriage takes place. But at the moment of becoming a mother Mrs. Jordan learns the horrible truth. She is dishonored and, in a pathetic scence, she orders her low caste husband to kill her, which he quickly does, because he thinks, he, too, that this is the only manner in which this tragic affair can be settled, after which he plunges the poignard, still dripping with blood, into his own breast. (Curtain.)

"This tragedy had obtained an immense success in America. It contains no suggestive scenes and can be heard by all the world save, I think, but those "unamiable" creatures, who descend, very indirectly, some times, from Ham, son of Noah.

No High Opinion

"Oh well, say what you will, this play, or any similar one, even if it be as well intentioned as 'Uncle Tom's Cabin', gives one, a not very high opinion of certain American customs.

"In the face of this I ask if our customs are not better. Doubtless, in an American hotel we would hardly read the Bible placed beside our ice water, but in following "Ben Hur" (American film) Christ's agonised march to Calvary, we cannot forget that Christ died to save all men, regardless of the color of their skins."

All Men Equal

In the National Library in this city is now an exposition of documents, prints, and pictures of the time of the French Revolutinon.

One of the most striking of these lithographs depicts the equality of all men. It shows a nobleman and standing beside him is a very dark Negro wearing only a loin cloth. Both are of the same height and a measuring stick resting on the heads of both. Underneath are the words "All men are equal." Seventeen years before (1776) similar words had been written in the Declaration of Independence, a document from the French Revolutionists derived much inspiration. The American colonists, however, meant only white men, while the French included all men, that is, the black men in the French West Indies, who, today, enjoy equality with white Frenchmen, in their homes and more so in France.

Geo. Seibel Reviews 'Negro In Theatricals'

DECLARES RACE ACTORS IN "AFRICANA" REVEAL NEW TREND ON THE STAGE

Aldridge Played "Othello" and Negroes Played In Old New York In 1820

By GEORGE SEIBEL
(In The Pittsburgh Sun-Telegraph.)

The coming of a Negro Revue to the Nixon Theater this week emphasizes anew the progress made by the African race in the past few years in the theatrical world, "Africana" brings as its leading feature Ethel Waters, a comedienne who has been compared to Raquel Meller, and who seems to be the legitimate successor of the late Florence Mills. But the entire company appearing in "Africana" is African—and the fact that they have drawn crowded houses of white complexion during about a year in the East shows that the color line in art is fast being effaced. The Negro has developed a theater of his own, and in many cities the Negroes are actually building their own theaters, to play to their own people, instead of the "white trash."

We have become accustomed to seeing colored performers carry off the honors in white productions. Earlier this season, when "Weather Clear, Track Fast" was given at the Nixon, Buck and Bubbles, two colored comedians and dancers, showed they had more magnetism than Willard Mack's melodrama or Joe Laurie's comedy work. In "Golden Dawn" and "Show Boat" colored singers scored the biggest hits. Several vaudeville turns of real blackface have been above the average. Now comes another Revue presented by an entirely African ensemble—dancers, comedians, show girls, chorus and all. And they are appearing, not for the first time, in the sacred precincts of the noble Nixon.

A Black-Face Othello

Of course, the Negro on the stage is nothing new. One of the strongest rivals of the great Edmund Kean and the famous elder Booth was Ira Frederick Aldridge, a tragedian known as "the African Roscius." Aldridge appeared in Belfast as Othello, with Kean as Iago, and Kean praised him highly. There is a tradition that he was Kean's valet in his youth and so learned the valiant Edmund's words and ways. But there's another tradition that his father was a preacher in a New York Negro Church, and that Ira was sent to Edinburgh to study for the ministry, but drifted upon the stage.

Aldridge played Othello oftener than any other part, but also appeared as Aaron the Moor in Shakespeare's blood-and-thunder tragedy of "Titus Andronicus," and in Southerne's tragedy of "Oroonoko," which also was a favorite with Kean and Junius Brutus Booth. Zanga, Rolla and Orozembo about exhausted the repertoire available for a black tragedian, but with his limited possibilities Aldridge managed to get decorations from the rulers of Russia, Austria and Prussia, besides playing in Brussels to enormous audiences, and marrying an English woman. He used his color as a stage asset. Madge Kendall, who played Desdemona with him, tells how one of his effects was gained by letting her little white hand rest in his huge black hand during the course of the drama.

First Colored Company

But there is record of an all-black company appearing in New York City about 1820 or 1821. An old play-bill advertises "The African Company," which is to appear at "The Theater in Mercer street, rear of the One Mile Stone on Broadway." There is no other trace of this company or this theater, but it is supposed to have been a troupe of Negro amateurs, who arrived nn the scene a century too soon. Our Negro minstrels, of course, were not originated by Negroes; in fact, the credit is usually given to Gottlieb Graupner, whose name smacks of the Rhine rather than the Kongo.

That the Negroes should devote themselves to the musical stage is natural, although Eugene O'Neill gave one of their fine actors an opportunity to win fame in "The Emperor Jones." Music is a field in which the Negro always has excelled. Just about the best tenor appearing in concert today is Roland Hayes, a Negro. And just about the best composer in the English world today is Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, whose father came from Sierra Leone, though his mother is an Englishwoman. His "Hiawatha" trilogy is full of melodic charm and notive rhythmic effects. He has written incidental music for "Othello" that ought to live. Behrbohm Tree got him to furnish the music for many of Stephen Phillips' tragedies, like "Herod," "Ulysses," "Nero" and "Faust."

So we see that the black race has a creditable background of achievement in music and drama. The Harmon Foundation has just awarded prizes and medals to 16 Negro men and women for distinguished work in the arts and sciences—the literary prize going to Charles Weldon Johnson for "God's Trombones," a volume of poems. The Negro is carving a niche for himself in every art, including drama. This week will reveal in how far Ethel Waters can qualify to take the place of the late Florence Mills. When Florence Mills died a month or two ago, she was mourned as sincerely as Mansfield and Irving at their passing. It looks as if the race which has given to art a Henry Ossawa Tanner, to oratory a Frederick Douglas, to poetry a Paul Laurence Dunbar, and to education a Booker T. Washington was destined to make a notable contribution to the new American drama.

Lynch Law at a Downtown Theatre

"FOREWORDS are so dangerous," writes David Wallace, especially fo plays, that I hesitate to put into cold type what T. S. Stribling and I feel about our drama, "Rope," which James W. Elliott is to produce Tuesday night at the Biltmore Theatre. But being, as we think, off the eaten track, and touching, in the passing, the rather important topic of ynch law, a few paragraphs of "why and wherefore" may not be amiss.

We should like to make clear first of all that this is not a dramatization of Mr. Stribling's novel, "Teeftallow," but rather a play based upon certain vital spots in that novel. I have always felt that the mediums of fiction and drama were so distinct that a person was foolish who tried to transfer to the stage all that a novelist had spread out upon his broad canvas. But occasionally there is a dramatic situation in a novel, or perhaps a sequence of dramatic situations, indicating possibilities for theatrical treatment. I thought I saw material in "Teeftallow," and Mr. Stribling agreed with me that if we were to use it for a play we should have to refocus the story entirely. We started out then almost as if a fresh dramatic idea had occurred to us, but, of course, we had the enormous advantage of all the color and atmosphere which Mr. Stribling had worked nto the novel of his native Tennessee.

The situation which interested me in "Teeftallow" was that of a hot-blooded young Southerner, about to lead a mob, stopping to seduce the girl he loved, and missing the lynching. Then came the dramatic development that the mob, when it learned of his dfeection, turned on its own leader and his girl, like a pack of wolves. For dramatic purposes, we motivated this action so that the girl, with a horror of violence, deliberately gave herself to her sweetheart so that he would be held back from committing murder.

It will be observed that our central character, Abner Teeftallow, is not the conventional hero. Mr. Stribling made no attempt to glorify him n the book, and neither have we in the play. He is simply a likable human being with strong convictions and strong prejudices, the result of his environment, making terrific mistakes, and learning from them how wrong a man can be. Through two acts of our play, Abner believes in the justice of mob violence, and it is not until he has been through torture from his own mob that he emerges at the end seared physically and mentally, but a man who knows.

We have made an attempt to deal honestly and seriously with the menace of lynch law, but "Rope" is no treatise. Mr. Stribling has been at rehearsals constantly to check up on details, and we have worked unceasingly to make the play as simple and direct a portrayal of Tennessee life as was the novel.

Frank Merlin, the director, has shown enthusiasm for the play from the day that he read it. He took it to Mr. Elliott, who, being a Georgian, knew the subject matter at first hand. With only one exception, the cast is picked by Mr. Merlin and myself. Nearly all of them are Southerners—several have only recently crossed the Mason and Dixon line—and in a number of cases the parts are being played by actors whom I have always regarded as ideal for these characters. Whether "Rope" will interest the public or not is for the gods to decide."

Theatrical - 1928

Individual Trouperette.

COLOR BAR TO GROUP GALLS WASHINGTON

Tenor Appearing At Local Theatre Don't Like Race Ban

RECOUNT DIFFICULTIES

Must Send Out For Meals, He Says

Expressing his regret that his race could not hear him (sing, George D. Washington, appearing at the Century Theatre this week with Ted Claire's "Blossoms," told the AFRO that he would not have signed the contract had he known the theatre's policy was to bar colored patrons.

"I have thumbed down contracts that would take me to houses having the "lily-white" idea, said Mr. Washington, "but because I did not know I stumbled up on the same conditions in St. Louis, Mo., Kansas City, Washington, D. C., and finally here in Baltimore."

Race Mixing O. K.

In response as to how race actors were treated when they traveled with all-white aggregations, Mr. Washington said, "I make it my business to have my own dressing room and at least most of the trouble is averted. And if there is hesitation about a place to get my meals, I send out for them, and eat in my dressing room.

"An American restaurant will turn you down any time," he said, "but it takes a pretty mean Italian to deny a fellow a square meal. For that reason when not near a lunch room owned by the race, I usually try to find an eating house owned by one of the 'fair sons of Italy.' They are at least human, and tho oftimes reluctant, seldom, if ever, refuse."

Don't Wear Tux

Contrary to the common belief among our people, it is not absolutely necessary to sing spirituals to get on the big circuits. I have sung "On the Road to Mandalay," "Chloe," "Just Like A Melody Out of the Sky," and "Ready For The River," said Mr. Washington. But don't try singing in a tuxedo until you have really ARRIVED. The other race doesn't care for the colored man in a tuxedo."

Mr. Washington, who was born in Rock Island, Ill., is the son of a Methodist minister, who likewise was engaged in the musical world before he donned "the cloth". He has been singing for the public for about five years. He is married and has one child, a little girl.

FILM FAME BECKONS AND HARLEM IS AGOG

King Vidor, Quietly Scouting for Types for Negro Picture, Has to Hire a Hall.

'STRIKE' MENACES CABARETS

Girl Entertainers, Minstrel Man and Cake-Walk Champion All Seek Chance in Hollywood.

Hollywood came to Harlem yesterday and the largest negro community in the world scrambled wildly for a place on the silvery screen. King Vidor, director of "The Big Parade," is here to select a cast for a new film—a story of negro life—and for the first time the door to fortune and fame in the movies has opened without the certainty of Pullman expenses to California and the uncertainty of being sent back on the bumpers. As a result, current theatrical attractions, cabarets and night clubs [illegible] are threatened with a walk-out. Even Bill Vodery, negro musical director of Florenz Ziegfeld's "Show Boat," talked yesterday of resigning.

Fifteen persons are needed for the development of Mr. Vidor's story and half of them have already been selected. About the most important type Mr. Vidor is combing Harlem to find is that of a youthful, tantalizing charmer. So many applicants appeared in person after news of the quest became general that Mr. Vidor was obliged to engage Leslie Hall, 260 West Eighty-second Street, as a locale for sifting them out.

Applicants Thinned Out.

The candidates came there yesterday on foot, by subway and taxicab and, in one instance, by limousine and liveried chauffeur. By last night matters had pretty much resolved themselves into a contest between Josephine Hall of the Cotton Club and Honey Brown of the Harlem Club, "the girl who can't stand still." Mr. Vidor said he was going to reserve decision until after some screen tests had been made.

Miss Brown has bobbed hair which stands straight out from her skull for approximately three inches. Yesterday she wore a brown satin frock with an artificial rose and cake-walked on her toes, after which she sang a song for Mr. Vidor. Miss Brown said she came to New York from Chicago because of a lack of sufficient "atmosphere" in Chicago and confided to Mr. Vidor her ambition to be known as the "Colored Clara Bow."

"You have lots of pep, have you?" asked Mr. Vidor.

Miss Brown flashed a smile, signaled to the pianist and straightway broke into a spirited dance during which she skinned her left knee and tore a hole in one stocking.

"If we sign you up, we'll buy you a new pair," suggested Mr. Vidor.

Miss Hall, who chatted with animation while the other candidates went through their paces, admittedly made a flattering impression upon Mr. Vidor, who said he considered her "unusual."

Cake-Walker Seeks Role.

Candidates for the rôle of Zeke, the leading man, included Pickanny Hill, "champion cake-walker of the world," who had buff spats on yesterday and carried an overcoat over his left arm. Mr. Vidor wanted to know if he had ever been in motion pictures.

"Why, I've just go through making a picture—an all-colored one," said Pickanny. "It's one of the greatest every made."

The other candidates included Ensign Dewey Killingsworth, Joe Ward and an uncounted number, all wearing spats, freshly creased trousers and silk handkerchiefs of variagated colors in their breast pockets.

The two other chief types to appear yesterday were aspirants for the part of Parson Johnson, a negro preacher, and Mammy Johnson, his wife. Harry Gray, who has snow white wooly hair and is 86 years old, attracted attention. He had on a silk hat and frock coat, and said he was now a newspaper man but had onoce been a negro minstrel.

It became known that Mr. Ziegfeld was threatened with the loss of Bill Vodrey, musical director of "Show Boat," when Mr. Vidor asked him if he could recommend any one to rehearse the negro spirituals and other songs to be given in connection with the sound picture. Bill hesitated only a moment.

"I can recommend myself above any one else in the world, Mr. Vidor," he said. "That's my specialty. If Mr. Ziegfeld will let me off—I can let you know by 5 o'clock tonight."

"Tomorrow'll be all right," Mr. Vidor told him.

It will probably take three more days before the available material here is sifted out, Mr. Vidor thinks. He is visiting negro churches, drug stores, places of entertainment and other localities where negroes gather in Harlem. In addition, scouts from casting agencies are running up large taxicab bills. It is said that Mr. Vidor has talked to more than a thousand candidates here in the last two days.

ON BROADWAY

By FLOYD J. CALVIN

"GOIN' HOME," a drama by Ransom Rideout. Presented by Brock Pemberton at the Hudson Theatre, 44th street, East of Broadway, New York City. Staged by Mr. Pemberton. Settings by Raymond Sovey. This play was awarded the first prize in a national contest conducted by Longmans Green & Company, under the auspices of the Drama League of America. The judges were Nathaniel E. Reid, Walter Prichard Eaton and Mr. Pemberton. The play was originally called "Deep River," and since the award it has been extensively revised.

9/15/28

"Goin' Home" is the first Broadway drama of the season in which Negro actors are given a chance to show their ability. It might be called a Negro play, although the leading roles are played by whites. It is said James B. Lowe was offered the leading role, but found to be not suited to it. As I saw the play Thursday evening, September 6, the leading role was played by Richard Hale (Israel Du Bois), who is a brother of Ruth Hale, wife of Heywood Broun, the columnist. Mr. Hale is from Tennessee, I understand. I can only say Mr. Hale played his part—(that of a Negro soldier in France)—with much feeling and a great deal of artistic power. One who did not know might suspect a Negro as playing the part. That statement is meant to be in Mr. Hale's favor. I understand he takes his part quite seriously, and he really tries to portray the part as a Negro would portray it, without too much exaggeration. I think he has succeeded unusually well in that.

"Major Edward Powell," the prejudiced Southerner whom I was told I would like to shoot on sight, I found quite interesting. This part, played by Russell Hicks, white, is of such a nature that most Negroes would like to walk out on it, but I found it a pleasure to watch the Major change front from the rabid, unreasoning New Orleans prejudice, to the brotherly love and human sympathy which is deep in us all.

Clarence Redd as "Simba Saar," the Senegalese soldier, is good. I had an opportunity to see him in "Kongo" as "Fuzzy." His African war dance was artistically done, and he was roundly applauded by the audience. Redd is a Negro. Thomas Moseley as "Jim," a deserter, is refreshing. His philosophy on the United States gives one a chance to see the other side of our problems, but he finally calms down and comes on home, which is probably the best thing to do, after all.

"Goin' Home" is a story of Negro soldiers in France just after the war closed. It takes DuBois, who is a native of New Orleans, and who as a butler to a rich Southern family was caught in France as the war opened, gets him shanghaied into the French Foreign Legion, marries him to a French woman and settles him in a French seaport town just as the war closes. On their way home from the war a regiment of Negro soldiers, under command of Major Powell, Southerner, and DuBois' former boss, comes by the cafe which DuBois and his French wife are running. The play gives Major Powell a chance to vent his spleen against Negroes in general to the French woman, which is probably the hardest part of the story for a Negro to stand. Tempers and passions rise and fall. Powell, the Southerner, is finally caught by DuBois, the Negro, with his French wife, and when just about to kill him, he suddenly kills his friend, the Senegalese, who is trying to save DuBois the trouble by finishing Powell with his war knife. This act by DuBois causes Powell to use his influence in trying to save his former butler from the penalty of the French law, and Powell tells the police he killed the African. The truth finally comes out, however, and through Powell's influence, DuBois is released. Then Powell takes DuBois back home with him to America, after having boasted "if that nigger was ever seen in America again after having lived with a white woman, he would be strung up."

There are 14 Negroes in the play and eight whites.

Nearly Forty Shows On Majestic Circuit Start On Tours After Workouts

By CHAPPY GARDNER

NEW YORK, Sept. 13.—Daily rehearsals for the revues soon to go out over Jack Goldberg's new Majestic circuit have been going on for three weeks. Lafayette hall, at West 131st street, is the behive of activity these days for many performers who hope to make the grade and be placed at work by Labor day. It is estimated that more than 600 race men and women will be employed this fall at wages never before payed a colored performer. Jack Goldberg, who heads the new theatrical enterprise, says that he has 40 houses all over the country waiting to play the new productions. He states that his only trouble now is to get enough skilled actors to fill the ranks. He is determined to give the people the newest kind of shows. Having all new faces, new bits and situations that are sure to please those waiting to see what the new circuit has to offer by way of improved entertainment. Performers with well known reputations have been signed up to lead various companies. Their names appear in all advertisements as presenting this or that revue. This feature has in itself a new brand of drawing power for the Majestic circuit. Two shows have already hit the road for early openings. One by Bessie Smith called Opening in the Palace, Norfolk, 27th, and another led by the veteran showman and female impersonator, Andrew Tribble, whose show bears the name "Ophelia Snow from Balto," that opens in Cleveland on the 27th.

One thing certain, the Majestic begins with men back of it whose years of experience at show business counts for much. Besides they go into this business with ample and unlimited finance. They firmly believe they can make money for themselves and the actors. Mr. Sam Grisman, assisted by Irving Fillat and Louis Azorosky, have charge of the production department, while the publicity is handled by Morris E. Cain. Jack Goldberg is president and organizer; J. J. Meyers, vice president; Lew Goldberg, secretary; Tim Brym is general musical director of the entire circuit. Miss Ona Welsh is at the piano for Andrew Tribble's show.

PORGY PILLORIED

DUBOSE HEYWARD'S play, "Porgy", now a current attraction at a down-town theatre, is the cause of much speculation as to the reaction of colored people, especially patrons, to its portray of "Catfish Row" and other scenes depicting prebian and peasant Negro life of the present day. The Chicago Daily News displayed interest in the phase of how the Negro feels about plays of this kind by having several colored leaders interviewed as to their reactions relative to the influence of such a play on white audiences.

Some of those interviewed expressed the opinion that "It will give the public a debasing opinion of our race." Others said, "It is an admirable stage vehicle for Negro expression, illustrating the sudden recognition of Negro materials and Negro actors in serious drama."

We do not think that Negroes should be either sensitive or apprehensive about the influence of Negro plays on the public mind to the end that they be discredited. The intelligent citizens know that there are types of Negroes as well as types of other races and that "Porgy" no more represents the entire colored race than does "Shylock" the Hebrews. In fact the other groups know more about us that are both creditable and discreditable than we know ourselves.

The great opportunity and the thing to do is to produce the type of plays creditable to the race. But the race is too disinterested to do that. Then it should keep quiet about the plays others produce.

Andrew Bishop in Much Better Role

Alhambra Players Going Over Big in Revue and Playlet This Week

Andrew S. Bishop has a long record of successes in Harlem, up to the time he left New York five years ago. But never has he surpassed the role he is now playing at the Alhambra in "Red Light Magic."

At its finish the enthusiastic applause sent the curtain up seven times while the players bowed and smiled their thanks for the appreciation of the audience so emphatically conveyed.

In a small town Andrew S. Bishop is judge of the city court and he tampers justice with mercy, much to the disgust of the narrow-minded including his spinster sister, played by Estelle Dawn, and her antique suitor, Alonzo Fenderson.

A "scarlet woman," delightfully portrayed by Edna Barr, comes to his home to seek his aid for another girl. The judge falls in love. No one understands but a lawyer friend, Jimmie Baskette, and the judge's lovely niece, Edna Harris.

A white slaver seeking to regain his hold on the girl follows her to the judge's home. She refuses to return to the old life and the brute, played by William Edmonson, shoots her down.

How the judge, crushed by this sorrow, finds a "way out" strikes a tragic note that reaches every heart.

The gay part of the program gives Emmett Anthony a wonderful opportunity to display his comedy gifts—so much so, in fact, that offers have come to him from Broadway managers. So Harlem had better enjoy him before he goes to a theatre where the price of admission is six times as much as at the Alhambra.

In "Dancing Dandies" Emmett Anthony sings all his famous specialties before the audience is satisfied, and is seen in several comic sketches. Crackshot and Pigmeat, a new recruit to the Alhambra Troubadours, are the other funny men, and S. H. Dudley Jr. and Jimmie Baskette assist.

Doris Rheubottom delights and Ida Brown charms. Mary Clemons has a madcap dance, and the chorus of eighteen boys and girls romp in and out of the gayety.

The feature picture, "Fangs of Power," has Johnny Walker and a popular cast.

Eureka Temple, the Elks' ladies' auxiliary, has a big theatre party at tonight's midnight show.

"BLACKBIRDS"

White Woman Says She is Glad Ill-Mannered Southerners Caused Rumpus and Tells Why.

To the Editor of the Amsterdam News:

Dear Sir:

After I had attended a performance of Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds" which, let me say first, has many fine features and at least one incomparable one, I read the account of the near-riot that a few Southerners had attempted to stage.

Without any thought of excusing the atrocious manners and inexcusable ignorance which prompted this crass discourtesy, may I conjecture, aloud, would this incident have taken place had it not been for the vulgar dancing in the show? If I had been one of the chorus, I should have said that I had laid myself open to what occurred.

Perhaps I may be permitted to say—being a white woman—that I deplore the fact that Negroes can be found who will allow themselves to be thus exploited (for that is what it amounts to) by white people who care not how vulgar or vile a performance is, just so they can coin money out of it! And especially is this to be deplored at a time when Negroes of the right sort are reaching and are deserving high places in the world of the plastic arts, the concert platform, the drama, etc.

Negroes who lend themselves to anything less than the best here are undoing what Florence Mills did; what Roland Hayes, Paul Robeson, Jules Bledsoe, Evelyn Preer, Rose McClendon, Frank Wilson and others are doing. They are making progress difficult on a road that is difficult enough, heaven knows.

"Blackbirds'" most vulgar dancing got a lot of applause—yes; but the act that got the most—Robinson's dancing—was as clean and delightful as anything could be.

I am glad these ill-mannered white Americans from the South did what they did. Perhaps it will bring a few Negro girls to their better selves. Are Negroes, generally speaking, so unmindful of the unique value and beauty of their artistic contributions? Are they so blind to their real opportunities that they do not know that it is they who can dictate—if they will—as to the kind of entertainment they shall put on? Are they entirely unknowing of the fact that it is in their power to raise or to help raise the tone of the American stage which inherently vulgar white men (not women) have been steadily lowering for a matter of a dozen years now?

(Signed) BLANCHE WATSON.

New York,
Sept. 20, 1928.

Pure Cracker Deviltry

A CURIOUS ATTITUDE was expressed in the letter of Miss Blanche Watson in last week's issue of The Amsterdam News. Writing of the disturbance created by a group of Southerners at a performance of "Blackbirds," she said that the girls brought it on themselves by their vulgar dancing.

MISS WATSON'S LETTER is all the more surprising because she is known as a genuine friend of the Negro. She should know that a colored girl does not have to be vulgar to be insulted by a Southern white man. Has she been told why colored theatrical companies no longer tour the South? It is because of the Southern white men who invade the cars with drawn revolvers to intimidate the men and assault the girls. The Southerners who tried to break up the "Blackbirds" performance would have insulted Florence Mills, Paul Robeson or any Negro performer.

THE DANCING IN "BLACKBIRDS," moreover, has hardly a single vulgar suggestion. In nudity and vulgarity the "Blackbirds" chorus is puritanical compared to the performance of some of the white choruses. The Southerners' behavior at the "Blackbirds" show was due to pure "cracker" prejudice and deviltry, and nothing else.

NEGROES IN "AMERICANA"

New York City, (ANP)—"Americana," a new revue, opened in Boston after rehearsing a month in New York, last week. In the cast are eight colored men and twelve girls. The men are given singing roles and the girls do both, sing and dance.

Theatrical - 1928
Individual Troupes, etc.,

RACE RIOT BARELY AVERTED WHEN MEN INSULT ACTRESSES

Bill (Bojangles) Robinson Defies Sixty "Crackers" for Hurling Vulgar Remarks at Adelaide Hall and Other Beauties on Stage

Derision and vulgarity hurled at actresses in Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds of 1928" at the Liberty Theatre by a delegation of Southern whites Thursday night threatened to precipitate a race riot and necessitated calling out an emergency squad of police.

A tense situation was created and fear of a battle seemed imminent. The tumult died down only after the arrival of police, and after Bill (Bojangles) Robinson had defied and reprimanded the disorderly Southerners.

Members of the "Backbirds" company declared that the delegation, about sixty in number, yelled insults to the chorus girls during the performance. "I'd give you $5 to be with you,' and "How would you like to have that nigger wench?" were some of the unmanly queries they made.

Adelaide Hall was reported to have stopped a number because of the insults hurled at her.

Complaining backstage about the indignities to which they were subjected, the girls found a champion in Bill (Bojangles) Robinson, one of the stars. He stopped the show, rushed to the stage, and upbraided the disorderly whites, who, he declared, were from Dixie, and surely had never seen a colored show.

Whites Pelt Actor

His tirade was greeted by a shower of programs, pennies and other small objects. "Bojangles" stood his ground, however, and declared that he would personally return the admission fee to all who would leave the house.

Several of the unruly Caucasians started threateningly toward the actor, and were in turn warned by Negro patrons, who comprised a large portion of the audience. Numerous whites in the boxes cheered the actor's stand, and later crowded about him to shake his hand.

Lew Leslie, white, producer of the show, was not in the theatre at the time of the commotion, and did not return until the affair had subsided. He made no public statement.

News of the threatened riot flashed through the theatres in the Times Square district, and almost immediately half a hundred white stage hands forced their way into the Liberty Theatre, backstage, ready to repel any onslaught by the Dixie visitors.

Cops End Disorder

Their presence was not needed, however, as the arrival of police instantly put an end to the disorder. Though no arrests were made, the police remained in front of the house until the final curtain.

"Blackbirds of 1928" passed its 175th performance Monday and is being accorded the distinction of being possibly the finest Negro revue to play Broadway. With the addition of Johnny Hudgins to the cast on Labor Day, weekly box receipts are reported to have hit the high mark of $24,000.

Another Young Star Rises on Horizon And Britain Pays Tribute to Holland

Former Canadian Athlete, in Part Made Famous by Paul Robeson in European Edition of "Showboat," Makes Splendid Impression as He Starts Tour

—(By Romeo L. Dougherty)—

There is one outstanding fact which, no doubt, many of our readers and a few of our associates in Negro journalism lose sight of in the desire to produce a Negro newspaper trying hard to adhere to the standard as set by the white publications. That fact is that on account of the peculiar position we occupy as a race in this country it is a physical impossibility to fully depart at times from the personal element when writing to those in the race gaining the laurels for which they strive; especially when you happen to know them personally.

The white writer can afford to be at all times impersonal because the same things confronting us cannot apply. We occupy the place of "the man farthest down" in these United States, and the reactions which arise within us at the success of the member of the race are bound to be different, hence the apology if perchance a tendency to "crow" just a wee bit when we enthuse over the success of young Gilbert Holland.

As an athlete Holland had gained great acclaim in Canada, and when he sought us out shortly after his arrival in this country we bade him welcome with a warmth that was natural as we found him as fine and upstanding a member of the race as it had been our good fortune to gaze upon for many a day. Holland, like Robeson, always cherished a leaning towards the stage, and some of his best work was done as a member of the Miller and Lyles "Rang-Tang" company. When the show closed he found employment in his sphere, but he never ceased to work towards getting a real opportunity, and when it came he again sought us out.

We are not prompted by a sense of boastfulness in pointing out these things, nor are we actuated with a desire to either shine in the reflected glory of those of whom we write or to receive applause for what we are in duty bound to do. However, in the face of the attempt of certain of our friends to belittle what we try to do, we believe it is well to at times wonder with our enemies at the apparent desire of the leading people in the world of sport and the theatre to at all times seek us out. Then, too, our public hasn't been so limited if we are to judge by the tabulation kept over a period of many years, and even though we do say it ourselves.

We are in receipt of a long and interesting letter from young Holland, and but for the fact that we are also in possession of clippings from the leading papers in London we would with pleasure reproduce it, but for the time being we are going to deny his friends the pleasure of reading of how he felt when he was given such a warm welcome at the hands of the English people. We have before us a clipping from "The Stroller," which tells us that "after a race across the Atlantic from America a colored singer named Gilbert Holland stepped in the stage at Drury Lane Theatre this afternoon to play an important part in the dress rehearsal of the touring production of the musical play "Showboat."

His appearance ended the anxiety of Mr. Felix Edwardes, the producer, who for a month had been seeking in vain for a colored singer to play on tour the part of "Joe," taken in London by Paul Robeson.

"I failed to find one in London and Paris," Mr. Edwardes said to me this afternoon, "and Sir Alfred Butt cabled to Jerome Kern, the composer, in America, asking for help.

"Mr. Kern telephoned across the Atlantic saying that he had lighted on Gilbert Holland, and was rushing him across. Mr. Holland has just arrived, and, after only a few hours' rest he went on for the dress rehearsal."

"Mr. Holland was warmly applauded by the audience at the reheasal."

The Daily Express informs us that:

"Humor, sentiment and pathos are mingled with haunting melodies to make 'Show Boat' a great musical play. In Gilbert Holland, who takes the part of Joe, the old Negro servant who watches the fortunes and failings of his master's family, has been found a Negro actor who worthily upholds the tradition of Paul Robeson at Drury Lane. Claud Bailey was a capable leading man and Mona Magnet distinguished herself with brilliant acting."

In the meantime the Daily Despatch says:

"The episodes of the disjointed history are linked up by the thematic chant of Joe, the big colored man, who sings of 'Ole Man Ribber,' and, while he has only one line to speak, Joe is the character that towers above all the rest. Gilbert Holland, who plays the part, does literally tower over his fellows, for he is 6 feet 2 inches tall and he infuses into his song a desperate melancholy which seems to capture the hopeless monotony of the drudgery of slavedom."

Holland's arrival in England and the circumstances surrounding his first rehearsal are gone into at greater length by another London daily, the name of which our correspondent in his haste to get the matter to us failed to record. It says:

"A young man of imposing stature with the lithe figure of an athlete, is Gilbert Holland, the colored singer from New York, who arrived at Southampton just about twenty-four hours before he had to step on to the stage of Drury Lane Theatre to play the important part of Joe—Paul Robeson's part in town—at the dress rehearsal of the big touring production of 'Show Boat.'

"Although Mr. Felix Edwardes, the producer of 'Show Boat,' had only a few hours in which to rehearse, he managed Mr. Holland so that he gave a most admirable performance.

"After the performance I met Mr. Holland in Mr. Robeson's dressing room at Drury Lane. He is a British subject, being a native of Hamilton, Ontario.

"Like Paul Robeson, he is the son of a minister of religion. He was educated at the University of Toronto. Mr. Robeson was trained to be a lawyer; Mr. Holland to be an architect.

A Rehearsal Audience.

"A dress rehearsal of a big touring show at Drury Lane, I found, is not punctuated at intervals by interruptions such as shouted instructions from the producer to the artists. The performance I saw went along as smoothly as any ordinary evening's entertainment.

"The big auditorium was very full, but not quite so. I asked the manager how the audience was collected and discovered that each member of the staff and each member of the company and of the orchestra had been given tickets for two seats. These people alone are numerically strong enough to bring together as large an audience as would delight the eyes of any theatre manager.

"What striking changes have come over the conditions of theatrical touring in recent years—as far as the crack companies like that of 'Show Boat' are concerned. For such the days are gone when a week's stay or even three nights was considered long enough."

And for the time being we will close this somewhat lengthy epistle with what the Manchester Evening News had to say:

"Perhaps the worst thing that can be said about 'Show Boat' is that we do not get enough of 'Joe,' the part in which Paul Robeson made a great hit at Drury Lane. Gilbert Holland, the colored singer from New York, is a worthy successor.

"A young man of magnificent build with the lithe figure of an athlete, he gave an admirable performance. He was educated at the University of Toronto and trained to be an architect. He may never build a skyscraper, but he can build by his singing most wonderful images in the mind. Analyze 'Old Man River' and the song says nothing at all. Hear Gilbert Holland sing and you know something of a soul of a people, you feel more of the mind of the colored people in its haunting pathos than in all the books on the race problem ever written by sociologists. To hear it sung by him is the strongest reason why 'Show Boat' should be seen.

"The story of the play is an extraordinarily thin affair, but, in this case, that matters not at all. It is merely an excuse for good singing, dancing, laughter—and, just here and there—a tear."

"Porgy" A Demoralizing Spectacle. Talent Wasted

By JOSEPH R. BROWN, Jr.
Editor, The Portal Alliance

The New York Theatre Guild's much heralded 'Porgy', a portrayal of Negro Life made it's appearance at the American Theatre this week and to say the best, is a demoralizing spectacle at this season of the year.

The scenes depicting Catfish Row, Charleston, S. C., are primitive and the characters elemental with the development of twelve year olds, with the exception of one of two "smart folk" from the 'big city'—New York. The theme is repulsive to the present ambitions and achievements of the Negro of today and is directly opposed to the efforts being made to enlighten the world as to the hopes and attainments that rest within our breasts.

The first scene with its bedlam and craps shooting, with the language dampens the entire production. The following scenes with the scheming and conniving to make 'easy living' adds to the repulsiveness. True, Maria, keeper of the Cook Shop Jake, boss of the fishermen crew, Crown, the bully, Serena, the God-fearing woman, Crown's Bess, the vampire, are types that may be found in underworld life.

Porgy, the cripple mendicant, is too much imbued with the spirit of a Shylock to wield the masterful influence over the habitues of the district, while Sporting Life, the smarty from the big city fails to receive the proper recognition.

The singing of the Spirituals displays some wonderful voices and a blending of mournful sounds that only our group is capable of producing and would be considered a redemption for the production if it were not for the very repulsiveness of the settings surrounding.

Rose MacClendon as Serena gives a vivid portrayal of the God-fearing woman and still holds first rank as a character actress; Evelyn Ellis, as Crown's Bess gives vent to her soul but cowers under the weakness of the flesh, she is a remarkable actress; our own Georgette Harvey acts the part of Cook Shop keeper in an inimitable manner. Wesley Hill knows the type, Jack Carter as the bully plays well, while Percy Verwayne as Sporting Life shows a retirement not natural to the type he is portraying .

Abram Comathier excels as the officious and corrupt lawyer selling divorces to make women "Decent Ladies".

Frank Wilson as 'Porgy' reaches the heights in pathos, greed and vindictiveness, and he plays a well balanced part.

'Porgy' may be summarized as a play of superb acting, good scenic effects, soul-stirring music but demoralizing theme—a theme that the ambitions and achievements of our people are striving to forget and which we desire relegated to the past; it impresses the spectators all too vividly with that which we want them to never know and has a stultifying influence on our youth.

CHICAGO SEES OFFERINGS OF NEGRO ACTORS

By AMY LESLIE
(In Chicago Daily News)

Not many time in any year has the loop gone in for featuring blackface comedy so extravagantly as it does this week, for there are many white comics indulging in their old-time success of blacking up or putting on the fashionable "high yellow" or plain black-and-tan somberness of hue as well as real black folks entertaining.

At the Blackstone "Porgy," an entirely real Negro entertainment is proving not only one of the most vitalizing and happy offerings of the scholarly guild but one of the biggest hits of the year. The little play itself is something so well written by clever people and so beautifully played by colored actors hired by the Guild for just this delightful play that it has made a success not soon to be forgotten either by those of their own race or those of us who like fine acting by any race.

Then at the Erlanger Miller and Lyles, good boys in a shuffle or "spiritual," with other men, Negroes, too, and with good voices, hold their own in a variation of their old rouser "Shuffle Along." They call their show "Keep Shufflin'," which reminds me of the old show, though maybe it is not so vitalizing because not so new as the other show was when fewer Negro actors entertained.

At Majestic

Over at the Majestic, McIntyre and Heath, who always blacken up whether for the first part, just a variety act or "The Ham Tree," have more Negroes in their company than they have white actors, though of course the white men, some of them, keep white while others, like Bert Swor and Bud Williamson, remind of other days of regular minstrely by blacking up blacker.

Krankie James keeps her radiant color exquisite litte Beth Miller does too, though her biggest song and dance hit is "Hot Chocolate," a kind of "mulatto" balad of genuine racial imitation. Miss Miller is one of the lovely creatures of this show, as Lillian Rosedale is and Vivian Holt. Two of these pretty white ladies make up in the high yellow which Lenore Ulric and Helen Morgan made so fancy on Broadway and the team look well, but Miss Miller is chic, white, dark of eye, lovely and talented, and she lets her gifts go for her race in full.

There's a boy who does an act in the "Headin' South" show which is worth stopping in to see, if no time for the whole show is at hand. He is Rudolph Williams and he does a rataplan boot-blacking trick which is immense. He seems to be a young fellow with a good voice too, and his specialty fits the show as his voice does the music.

Miller-Lyles

Of course, Flournoy Miller of Miller and Lyles is a capital actor and his comedy is neat, clean and a whole lot better than many of his sassier white buddies on the same trail of laughs and applause. So also is Aubery Lyles (how are those for dime novel names?) and they have pleased pretty good audiences, all white folks at the Erlanger. Three three shows the one at the Blackstone, the one at the Majestic—which has a big average of Negro singers in the man chorus and two or three comedians black as the ace of spades, besides some lighter of color but the same race—and the one at the Erlanger, all Negro, make the situation interesting, especially as they are making good and doing their race a nice, big credit on the stage. They always make good actors.—(Continued next Week).

Race Actor Driving White Brother To Cotton Picking

Negro Actor Coming Into Own, Says Ashton Stevens, Frankest Of Critics.

By GEORGE D. TYLER

CHICAGO. — Ashton Stevens, white journalist and one of the frankest stage critics of today says, "With so many Negro actors on the white man's stage it looks as though white men may have to pick the next cotton crop and white women the Pullman sleepers."

Mr. Stevens tells us the Negro actor is certainly having his innings in the smart theatres of Chicago. The Theatre Guild's production of "Porgy", with virtually an all-Negro cast, is, apparently, delighting the fastidious patrons of the Blackstone. I saw more dress coats at Miller and Lyles' "Keep Shufflin'" than I ever saw before in the Erlanger.

Beginning Monday night Mr. Stevens and theatre enthusiasts had a chance to witness a new accomplishment in theatrical circles, that of three Negro shows, namely—"Porgy", "Keep Shufflin'", and "In Abraham's Bosom", which are appearing in loop theatres. This opens a new avenue in showdom, never before have three race shows, each a decided hit been known to invade the loop at one time.

Mr. Stevens' predictions may be true but according to Mr. Sime Silverman, publisher of Variety, there is no such thing as a "white man's stage", the stage, according to Silverman, is international and knows no prejudice or discrimination.

* * *

Through our esteemed friend, Mr. Stevens, we learned that Moran and Mack, the two black crows, are planning to go out in a show of their own called "The Circus Band", supported by forty colored actors.

* * *

After witnessing Wednesday's matinee performance of "Porgy", I dropped back stage where I exchanged greetings with Messrs. Frank Wilson. Jack Carter, Percy Verwayne, Hayes Pryor and Leigh Whipper. Among the ladies we greeted were: Musa Williams, Lottie Brown, Lillian Whipper and Mrs. Wilson.

* * *

Speaking of drama reminds me that on the same evening we were the guest of Misses Hamilton and Holloway at 4342 South Parkway, who are interested in presenting to Chicago a little theatre movement that hopes in time to combine with the Theatre Guild. After putting on a couple of the less complicated plays the organization will give 'Goat Alley'.

Interested in the movement are two playwrights, two well-known critics and several elocutionists. Leon T. Peyton, former general manager and treasurer of "Shore Life", advertising manger of the "Cincinnati Journal", and as a member of the staff of the Kay See Call", is one of the crtiics. As a performer he has had both dramatic and musical experience. Your own scribe is the other critic. Yours truly has served as publicity agent for some of the foremost actors and actresses of today, was principal of the Eastern Theatrical Service Agency, served as editor of the Baltimore AFRO-AMERICAN, Chicago Bulletin, World and Bee. Several season ago found the writer at the head of 'Our Gang' revue after which he took a flag at vaudeville. Earlier stage experience was gained through a dramatic company "Fifty Years of Freedom" in which the writer appeared as the bold bad villain.

Miss Holloway is the daughter of a prominent physician, who is interested in the movement. She has been carefully schooled in dramatics and has her work at heart.

Theatrical - 1928
Individual Troupes, etc.,

Whitney Again on Firing Line Against Author of "Negro Actor's Deficit"

Discussion of Enough Interest to Warrant Space Being Given in The Columns of This Paper

LEWIS COMES UP SMILING

Whitney's Latest Contribution Convinces Dramatic Editor That Theophilus Lewis Has a Better Grasp on His Subject

Editor's Note:—A few of our well meaning but misguided friends will tell us, and perhaps the publishers of the Amsterdam News, that we are devoting too much space to the discussion, which we might here remark is not considered a controversy, between S. T. Whitney and Theophilus Lewis, brought about by the article of Mr. Lewis appearing in "Ebony and Topaz" and which was reproduced in this paper.

We have been in such close contact with the actor, his friends and scores of those interested in what is going on in the theatre we feel that we are a better judge of what is interesting to these people than those far removed. We have been so close to the actor one nincompooh within the past few weeks has taken delight in telling us he has seen us back stage mingling with the performers. What he has tried to show is that we had no right to poke fun at a fellow writer who also had the habit of being seen back stage.

What Brutus has failed to remember is that we were having some fun with the fact that the writer we had in mind used to appear back stage with his largest pencil and a raft of paper, taking notes so that each and every performer should know that he was getting ready to tell the world about them. So that they would make no mistake and confound him with those of us beneath him as a writer, he also had his picture on his personal card.

Pardon the digression, but it had to come. We are today more firmly convinced than ever that Theophilus Lewis knew what he was talking about. We have read Mr. Whitney's article carefully and still find him a victim of mellow musings. Some of our learned sundown journalists will perhaps say that it is not good ethics for us to take sides in the matter, but we started it and have never lacked what little courage was necessary to state an opinion.

Careful and constant observation has brought us to the place where we would rather a discussion of this kind take up this entire page when the time is ripe than to be forced to reproduce the usual hash of a number of revues the sameness of which is so evident it is hard to believe that even yokels can see anything to enjoy in them week after week, month after month, and year after year. In the meantime Mr. Whitney's appended article has furnished us the best laugh of the new year. It is so easy to shoot it to pieces it will be like taking candy from a baby when Lewis pulls up his heavy artillery. My, my, my!

By S. TUTT WHITNEY.

An intelligent discussion of so vital a question, situation or problem, as the Negro actor and the stage should be productive of some good results.

I pleaded "not guilty" to Mr. Lewis' bitter denunciation of the Negro actor, as set forth in his article entitled, "The Negro Actor's Deficit." I eagerly anticipated his reply. I sincerely hoped that he would score some good points in favor of his argument. Truthfully, I am disappointed. As a member of my company put it after reading Mr. Lewis' reply, "Mr. Lewis replied, but he did not say anything."

I am compelled to score my good friend Romeo, either he is biased, has lost his powers of discernment selling his papers or is so enthusiastically partisan that he is no longer eligible to sit upon a jury and render a verdict. I refuse to admit that Mr. Lewis laid waste my claim and fail to catch even the reflection from the brilliancy of his reply.

The work of Whitney and Tutt in past years and up to the present time bears record that we have always stood for the highest and best that the Negro stage could produce. We do not favor indecency of any sort by any actor appearing upon any stage. But I do reiterate that the actor alone is not responsible for present day conditions.

Any manager reserves the right to cancel an unclean act or performance at a moment's notice. If the things said and done upon the stage, which Mr. Lewis scores so indignantly, were not sanctioned by the managers, they could not be said and done. If salaciousness, nudity and double entente did not appeal to the majority of our theatrical patrons, the managers would not allow the actors to indulge this form of entertainment. Our playwrights and producers include some of these features in their shows because they are desired by the managers and the majority of the theater-goers. It is as plain as the noonday sun in a cloudless sky. The evidence is irrefutable. The facts are daily impinged upon the minds and denting the pocketbooks of those of us on the road who attempt to evade the popular demand.

I am going to attempt to prove that Mr. Lewis is not entirely familiar with his subject nor is he intimately acquainted with the characters, ideals and accomplishments of some of the actors of whom he makes derogatory mention.

When Mr. Lewis speaks of the Negro stage I presume he refers to what is being done by race actors upon the stages of race theatres. The Negro stage was degenerate at its incipience. Starting with nothing of culture and intelligence to recommend it, it could hardly deteriorate. Instead, the trend of its progress has been steadily upward. Despite the lowly beginning, and the innumerable handicaps, managers, producers and actors are raising the standards of the race theatres.

Facts cannot be laughed or ridiculed away. From two or three honky tonks, frequented only by honky tonkers, we have increased the number of our theatres to more than 400. Some of these compare favorably with the best white theatres. The clientele of our theatres is improving in class. Many who forr erly scorned a race theatre are n frequent attenders. Managers actors will not be slow to meet demands of this class of patrons

What Mr. Lewis thinks of an individual is of small m But what Mr. Lewis has to sa work upon the stage or rather I have contributed to the stage demands consideration.

Mr. Lewis writes, "— an actor with a following can capitalize his ability for the benefit of his ideals. He can demand increased salary or box-office percentages until he becomes substantial enough to produce his own." That is exactly what Whitney and Tutt have done the greater part of their show career. We put out show after show, ignoring the offers of white producers because we wished to exploit our own ideals. Every show we produced was a clean, wholesome entertainment. Our shows were presented in white theatres to mixed audiences from New York to New Orleans. We played Bamboo Isle, Fifty-seventh street and Broadway, with "Oh Joy," and twenty-one New York publications rated it as one of the best race revues that had appeared downtown.

As to the influence of our Smarter Set Shows. Dr. Lester, Dean at Meharry University, said the Smarter Set shows had done more to inspire the youth of the South than any book written on the race problem. H. D. Collins, booking agent and theatrical manager, said that when the managers came to New York to get their season's booking, those from the middle West and South rated us as one of the three biggest attractions: Ringling Bros'. Circus, Al. G. Fields' Minstrels and the Smarter Set.

A delegation of students from the John Hopkins University of Baltimore witnessed a performance of our "Children of the Sun." Afterwards they wrote us that, in their opinion, the show was a delightfully surprising entertainment, but it was over the heads of the majority of our people. G. Wells Parker, scholar, ethnologist and archaeologist, supplied the historical data for "Our Children of the Sun," which in the opinion of Dr. Chas. B. Wickham and hundreds of others was ten years in advance of the times.

We have never presented a show or a tabloid without introducing a different, if not an original comedy situation. We laid the scenes for our stories in every part of the globe even in the Arctic zone, in an effort to present new dances and comedy situations. We emphatically deny that we have contributed in any way, as Mr. Lewis terms it, to the demoralization of the Negro stage. Our work stands for approval.

Mr. Lewis says that I doubt the actor's ability because I ask, "When did ever the actor force the public to accept a form of entertainment it did not desire?" I am still asking the question. Mr. Lewis presented no convincing argument to the contrary. He claims that "— every actor who creates a following does it —" The statement is absurd. Rather the actor divines or accidentally stumbles upon something the public really likes. Searching for what the public really likes is the biggest gamble in show business. Neither actors or managers care to gamble with a presentation, no matter how forcibly it may appeal to them, if they feel that it will not prove acceptable to the public. They know from experience that if the public does not like it the public will not pay to see it. The idea of forcing people to pay to see something they do not like is ridiculous.

To clinch his argument, Mr. Lewis says: "For example, a certain actor used to make a big hit by leading a trained mule on the stage. Did the actor in question wait for the public to hold a mass meeting and demand the act, or did he think it up himself and spring it on his audience as a big surprise and make them like it?"

For Mr. Lewis' information. It was Mr. S. H. Dudley who made such a tremendous hit with his trained mule. Mr. Dudley was one of our three greatest comedians: Earnest Hogan, Bert Williams and S. H. Dudley. His comedy was of that spontaneous, effervescing variety that tickled the risibles of all who saw him. He was original and versatile to a high degree. Yet, Mr. Dudley did not force his mule upon the public. He was showman enough to know that a trained mule, like a trained monkey, always makes a humorous appeal to an audience.

I do not say that an actor should not think, that he should be a copycat or a plagarist. Actors should always be studying, inventing and presenting something new or different to entertain the audience. But when an actor has a new idea and presents it, if it does not hit he cannot force the public to accept it, no matter what his standing, popularity or following. If it were possible to force the public to accept what it does not want in the theatrical line, the worry of promoters, managers, playwrights and actors would be at an end. There would be no more Broadway flops. The Jolsons, Cantors, Hampdens and Barrymores would not be so concerned about the vehicles in which they are booked to appear.

Mr. Dudley was a comedian with a large and enthusiastic following, but he never attempted to force the public to accept him in a serious dramatic role. Bert Williams always had a desire to appear in a serious dramatic role, but said he, "The people want me to make them laugh, they wouldn't accept me in a dramatic role."

Mr. Lewis continues: "At this moment I can only think of one actor and one actress who have anything distinctive to offer," Mark well, he did not say who is offering anything distinctive, but who has anything distinctive to offer. Mr. Lewis does not know all the actors nor all the actresses, neither does he know what we have to offer. Every actor worthy the name, has something stored away in his brain, something he would like to do. But when he suggests it to the managers, too often they tell him the public wants to see you do so-and-so, sing the song that made you popular, etc. The most difficult thing the actor encounters is to force the producers and the managers to take a chance with a new idea.

He says: "What Dodo Green did last week Emmett Anthony is doing this week and Slim Henderson will do next week. Week after week brings a continuous succession of mediocre actors trouping through the Negro theatre." The comedians whose names he mentioned are not mediocre actors. Each one enjoys the Broadway stamp of approval. They may at times give a mediocre performance, but they are capable of the best. We will not deny that there is too much sameness about the shows offered, but the theatres are crowded to see the shows. Dodo Green has at least three books that he has tried again and again to

secure the financial backing for their production.

Mr. Lewis says I lack patriotism and distrust my people because I said: "If we attempted to enact a portrayal of Toussaint L'Overture, we would most likely have to make the great patriot do the black bottom to put him over." That remark, boiled down, says Mr. Lewis, "means that American Negroes are a race of fools." It means no such thing. I was not referring to the race in general, but to the majority of those who attend our theatres, who would know little or nothing of Toussaint L'Overture or his history. I speak with the knowledge of experience. We gave a stage impersonation of Dean Kelly Miller in our "Darkest Americans" show; he was truthfully portrayed as a scholar and a thinker, yet we were amazed to find how many persons who saw the show had never heard of the great scholar, writer and philosopher. Many were bored by the presentation and we were severely criticized by one of our leading critics for introducing the character.

I know from sad experience and loss of money that a show cannot depend upon our thinkers, scholars and aristocrats for its support, so managers and actors are compelled to cater to those who do support the shows. Slowly and patiently these are being educated to appreciate a higher form of entertainment. About 15 years ago we introduced an animated moving picture scene in one of our shows, called "At the Old Post Office Door." During one of the pathetic scenes the audience guffawed with laughter. Chas. E. Barton, then with the Columbia Burlesque wheel, said: "Salem, you will have to cut that scene, it will not be appreciated by enough of your people." If presented now, that self-same scene would be a hit. The movies are a source of education and our theatre patrons are profitted thereby.

Mr. Lewis must remember that New York is just a one week stand. When we build a show to cover the circuit, we must build to please the patrons of the Lincoln Theatre at Winston-Salem, the 81st Theatre at Atlanta and the Strand in Jacksonville, as well as those of New York City.

Here is another phase of race show business that Mr. Lewis has perhaps overlooked, which makes it unfair to compare the white and race theatres. White promoters and managers have theatres for certain classes or kinds of entertainments, and each of these theatres has its clientele. Those who like burlesque can go to a burlesque theatre. And it is the same with those who like vaudeville, farce comedy, musical comedy or grand opera. We have but one theatre in most of the cities and we are compelled to attempt to please those who attend, no matter how different their tastes and desires.

Mr. Lewis takes his pen in hand, writes thusly: "So long as men like Mr. Whitney comprise the main personnel of our stage—and I say again he represents its best thoughts and ideals—it will never catch up with the general progress of the race." Doubtless Mr. Lewis is sincere but he cannot be familiar with my work, nor is he acquainted with my ideals. I have chosen to remain poor rather than sacrifice my ideals. I have always written up and not down. Our shows are mentioned as the best behaved shows on the road. I have conducted myself on and off stage in such manner that I count among my friends the very best people the race affords and have the respect and good will of the majority of all classes.

"Our stage," says Mr. Lewis, "needs new blood, new ideas, new ideals and new men and women. It needs new actors with courage enough to break away from the black-face traditions and the burlesque show technique of the Uncle Toms who have dominated it for twenty years."

By all means let us have new ideas, new blood and new ideals. But does Mr. Lewis realize that never before were there so many young men and women in the theatrical game as at the present time. Only one of the old line producers is now active. Whatever the conditions are at the present time, the new blood, of which Mr. Lewis speaks, must take the greatest amount of the responsibility.

Looking over some of the productions of the new blood, I have wondered from what source they dug up some of the material that the old blood has not used for the last 25 years. The courage and daring enthusiasm of youth can be matched by wisdom, experience and equanimity of age. I can't conceive that youth can be better qualified to write of the many complex emotions that affect human natures than intelligent, observant and experienced age. Because a man may be old counting the number of years he has lived, it does not necessarily mean that he cannot be mentally young. Again, a man may be old in point of service, and not be old in years. And this for Mr. Lewis' enlightenment and in defense of the old-timers whose work he disparages. With the exception of Irvin C. Miller, and he has just reached his zenith, the old-timers have not been active on our stage for the last five years. Nearly all the shows that Mr. Lewis has seen produced lately in our theatres in New York have been the work of the youngsters in the business. I have spoken. Selah.

P. S.—I learn that "Meek Mose" has closed; it was a good entertainment but not a financial success. Where was Mr. Lewis? Why didn't he give the promoters of "Meek Mose" his formula for forcing the show on the public?

1928 "BLACKBIRDS" SCORE IN ENGLAND

Eddie Hunter Wins Plaudits Of English As Comic And Pianist-Composer

NIT'S DANCING PRAISED

Eva Sherman And Nita Ward In "Flo" Mills' Role

LONDON—Will the phenomenal success of "Blackbirds," in which the late Florence Mills rode to the crest of her popularity, be repeated this year by the new company of the same name?

Eddie Hunter, author and star of the Columbia burlesque attraction, "4-11-44," is heading the "Blackbirds of 1928" with a company of 40 in a tour of the English provinces. The new edition has just been given a hearty reception since its opening five weeks ago and will probably enter London for a run.

Departing from his custom of playing only in straight comedy in the States, Eddie is being featured as a pianist, playing his composition, "Humming Bird Blues." The comic has adopted a new bywood, "Good gracious," to replace his humorous "Oh, my, my, my!"

The part carried by the late Miss Mills is being played in the new show by Eva Sherman and Nita Ward. The two have scored wherever they have played, and the entire company has received flattering press notices from the English press.

Not Black As Painted

Summing up its estimate of the "Blackbirds," the Southend Times said:

"Quite apart from the fact that this is an 'all-coloured' cast—though, incidentally, many of its members are by no means "black as they are painted," and, in some instances, would pass as Europeans—the show contains many novel features.

"Undoubtedly, the dancing is most unusual, and combined with lively music, proved an almost phenomenal and bewildering feature. There is plenty good, wholesale fun in the show, and few minutes ever elapse without laughter being evoked. The costumes and scenery, too, are original and striking, and the dark-skinned chorus works most effectively."

Dancing Is Feature

The Southern Daily Echo, of Southhampton, classed the offering as polished and of the first order during its week at the Hippodrome. The critic said in part:

"Brilliant dancing and capital comedy are outstanding features of the phenomenally successful London show, "Black Birds." Eddie Hunter, an artiste with an international reputation, is the leading comedian, and proved himself to last night's crowded houses a past-master in laugh-raising.

"He scored all the way in a series of exceptionally well-done comedy cameos, notably in the Sing-Sing prison burlesque, "Poor Old Joe" (a novel musical number) and "Humming Bird Blues," a captivating song scena, in which he had as partners the charming vocalist. Miss Anita

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day's work we'll admit, but I wouldn't advise acts or shows to make a practice of this. Moral: Make it your business to have a few minutes to spare.

Palace

Sunny California's own child, and one who made the "Our Gang" comedies famous, Sunshine Sammy, and his brother, Charlie, are strutting at the Palace for one week. About the biggest hit to be found on the bill is Elsie Janis, former movie favorite. These two please, and how!

Dreamland

Thursday night is theatrical nite here, and one can always find a host of talented folks on hand to greet them. Jack Cooper is host. "Coop" is the gink that made the words, "Pardner" and "S'long" famous.

Metropolitan

In spite of houses closing, cutting prices and changes of policy, Manager Matt Taylor refuses to frown. It is our belief that the song, "Let A Smile Be Your Umbrella" was dedicated to Matt.

Tate and his orchestra are offering overtures and jazz that is the talk of the southside, out 7th street way, and with Jerome Carrington here, and Cab Calloway across the street, the old corner is quite lively.

The Apollo

That shrewd manager, Emil Stary, has made several changes in his cast of stock players. He has obtained the services of Billy Ledman, Norman Harold and Bell Johnson. That house has an orchestra directed by Leroy Pickett that shoots out some of the hottest jazz in town.

Regal

Fess Williams and his Jazz Joy Boys are presenting "Syncopation Week." Boy, it's tight. The screen offering is "The Gaucho," starring Douglas Fairbanks.

Grand

Manager Miller offers Bonnie Bell Drew and her players in a Gala Easter Festival. Martin Klein is now in the field looking over the circuit.

What They Say

Lent, the unemployment situation and the Regal are all given as reasons for the slump that hit the other houses.

Lou Vernon at Regal

Lou Vernon, character artist, and late of "Our Gang Revue," is doing his second week here. Last week he was cast as a cop and this week he portrays the "old actor." It received a wonderful hand.

Laurence and Charlie

Charlie and Laurence, former dancing team of "Ginger Snaps," are working with a unit of five people, in and around Chicago.

The act, offering song and dance, is working the Junior Orpheum circuit, and will take a 12-weeks' trip to the coast. Lillian Goodner is featured.

"Clothe Nakedness" On Poster Figures Is Fraternity Plan

VIENNA, March 28.—(AP)—Several hundred members of the Pan-German College Fraternity set out last night with huge pots of paint to "clothe the nakedness" displayed on posters and billboards of female cabaret performers and cinema stars. when Vienna awoke this morning it found posters, once attractive, now resembling distorted examples of futuristic art.

The theatrical producers were indignant and at once began suit in the courts against those responsible. The latter on their part declare they were incensed by the nudity of certain performers, including the American negro dancer, Josephine Baker, and the failure of the government to pass a bill against obscene literature and certain types of pictorial art.

Robeson Entertained at House of Commons

A wireless message to the New York Times Saturday said that Paul Robeson was entertained Friday at luncheon in the House of Commons by members of the Labor Party. Ramsay MacDonald, former Prime Minister, was one of the guests and talked earnestly with Mr. Robeson. After the luncheon the theatrical star was taken to a seat in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery and later took tea with James Maxton and Miss Ellen Wilkinson. The diminutive Labor woman then took the noted actor and singer around the House and introduced him to nearly every distinguished member.

FOX GETS GILPIN FOR ALL RACE PICTURE

NEW YORK, Dec. 26—Charles Gilpin, stage star, is to make his screen debut for Fox in "Hearts in Dixie," a Movietone production which Paul Sloan is to direct. Gilpin attained prominence in the show world with "The Emperor Jones," stage success.

Walter Weems is doing the story, which will have an all-Negro cast, which will include Mme. Sul Te Wan, a voodoo woman. A mixed chorus of 50 will sing spirituals, plantation songs and old Southern tunes thru the picture.

ACTRESS IS STRICKEN.

Rosetta Duncan Becomes Ill in London.

LONDON, Nov. 17.—(UP)—The Duncan sisters' show, "Topsy and Eva," has been suspended for several days because of the nervous breakdown of Rosetta Duncan, according to a statement tonight by Vivian Duncan. Rosetta's breakdown was caused by the efforts of "certain American interests" to wreck "Topsy and Eva," Miss Duncan said.

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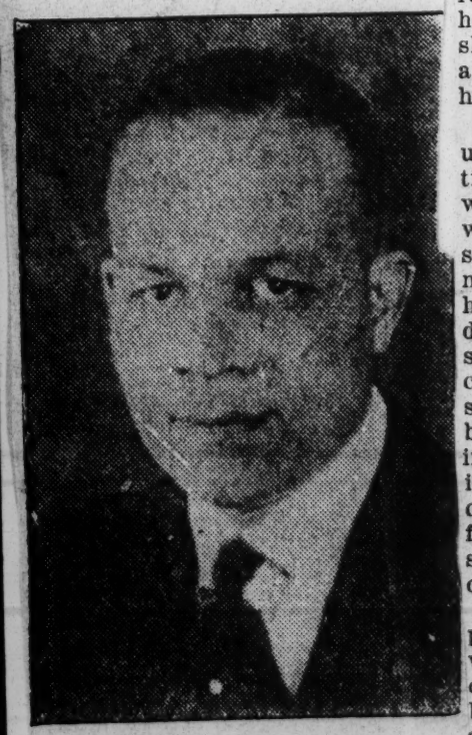
Johnny Hudgins in Paris

Star in Moulin Rouge's Most Expensive Production

By J. A. ROGERS

PARIS.

EACH year some Negro from across the big pond somehow manages to find himself or herself the center of attraction in this gay city by the Seine. There has been Florence Mills and there are Al Brown, Josephine Baker and others. Now the spotlight is turned on Johnny Hudgins, he of the "songless song" and the frisky feet —Moo-sieeu Dionne 'Eudjeens, as the Parisians call him. Already the Johnny Hudgins "Wah-Wah dolls" are on sale on the grand



— J. A. Rogers —

boulevards and are finding themselves into the boudoirs of the fair Parisiennes.

Hudgins is star of the Moulin Rouge this season in its new production—Paris Aux Etoiles—one of the most gorgeous and expensive productions in the history of the Parisian music-halls. While starring at the Ambassadeurs with Miss June, noted English comedienne, last May, the manager of the Moulin Rouge, M. Pierre Foucret, saw him and at once offered him an engagement at his theatre at a salary that runs into five figures weekly, now that the franc is 25 to the dollar. Some 350 persons are in the cast, and a seat on the main floor of the Moulin Rouge costs 70 francs, which at the current rates of wages would be about $6 in America. And at that seats must be engaged long in advance. The last star at the Moulin Rouge was the noted Mistinguett. Hence, to be star at this theatre means that one is a top-notcher.

Hudgins appears nine times in the evening, receiving generous applause, even though applause is rare in the French theatres. With his droll make-up; his huge, warty shoes; his supple, slippery feet, and his songless "Wah-Wah" song, he simply captivates his audience.

In one scene he appears as an ultra-dandy dressed in smart fitting sky-blue velvet, trimmed with white satin; blue hat, trimmed with satin, and hatband of rhinestones; glittering eye-glasses trimmed with the same; diamond heels, white spats and a cane of dazzling brilliance. In another scene he appears as the devil. The cast, in all its gorgeousness, is assembled on the stage when a number of his advance guard female imps, dressed as we suppose ladies in the hot infernal regions dress, come screaming down the stairs, followed by Johnny, who then struts his stuff to the satisfaction of all.

In still another scene he appears with one of the leading white comedians of the cast in a comic boxing match that is the hit of the evening. He is the only Negro in the cast and his intensely black face is quite striking among those hundreds of white ones. But in "Gay Paree," where the color-line existeth not, he capers nimbly around with the ladies, dressed as well as undressed. There are several white Americans in the cast, and many, many more in the audience, but as to how they enjoy this part of the evening's entertainment deponent sayeth not and careth not.

During the entracte we went to the stage door, presented our card, and asked to see Mr. Hudgins. We were shown into his beautiful dressing-room, which is trimmed in gold and brown, with gold borders, spangled curtains, fine carpets and hangings, big cushions and dolls of the other Parisian stars. Foremost of the many pictures on the walls or on the dressing-table were several of Mrs. Hudgins.

Mr. Hudgins received us cordially, and as the room was warm, one of the very, very few warm places one strikes in Paris during this cold snap, he saw to it that we were properly cooled, inside as well as out. When we asked him for some facts about himself he pointed to a large, well-bound scrap-book and asked us to consult that while he got ready for his next appearance.

Glancing through it I saw that he is a native of Baltimore; that he began his career at the William Daly theatre there, pulling the curtain up and letting it down for $5 a week; that he was a hit at the Club Alabam in New York for two years; that he has been featured in big electric signs on Broadway, in Piccadilly, London, and in Paris. One sees where he has been the subject of several lawsuits among managers eager to get his services, one of whom was B. C. Whitney, wishing to retain him in the "Chocolate Dandies," said that he was "the hit of the show." In the many clippings about his work one runs across such phrases as these:

"The world's greatest pantomime dancer."

"His oily, noiseless feet moved as if he had ball-bearing joints."

"Hudgins has created for himself the precedent as the foremost colored actor with his originality, spontaneity and unsurpassed shuffling of feet."

"See Hudgins and one will see what the art of sliding about the stage is. It is true that real art consists in having so much natural genius that you don't have to show it."

"His feet shuffled him into the aplause hit of the evening."

All of the above appraisals, except the first, are from leading white journals in America and England.

Of his work in "The Blackbirds," Le Gaulois, one of the Paris dailies, said: "The star of the colored revue is Florence Mills. She has the voice, the gracefulness, the distinction, but the comedian, Johnny Hudgins, is certainly the most original attraction of the evening. He is the king of clowns."

But perhaps the most striking of all the tributes Hudgins has received is from Snappy Stories, New York: "If the Prince of Wales could dance like that, there'd be some reason for the fuss that is made over him."

After all of this, it is easy to understand his present Paris success, and why many managers in America and elsewhere are now bidding for his services. The most advantageous of these offers, he says, is from William Morris to play picture houses, and he has accepted with him, his first engagement being with the new Paramount Theatre, New York

Captivates Audience With His "Wah-Wah" Song

sometime in May at the close of his present engagement.

Consulting his scrap-book further, one sees that the German, Austrian and Scandinavian papers have devoted considerable space to him, although he has never been in those countries; that he has been caricatured by some of the leading cartoonists of both continents; that he has played before many of the leading European and Asiatic monarchs, the Prince of Wales, and others of the French and English nobility; that he has been leading man with a French movie actress, Mme. Catherine Hessling, in a film that is to appear shortly called "Charleston"; and more, all in the space of nine years, for Mr. Hudgins is still quite a young man, and very modest in spite of his success.

When I asked him which of all his stage experiences stands out most in his mind, he said that it was his first engagement at the Star Theatre, Wiley avenue, Pittsburgh. "I was singing a song called 'I Love the Ladies,' but I got homesick for my mother and good Maryland fried chicken, so I quietly eased away, paying my way back home with all the money I had—$8." His first appearance, he said, was as an amateur at Ford's Opera House, Baltimore, while still in his teens.

Later at the close of the show, we had another chat with Mr. Hudgins, and he gave the impression that although fame has come his way, he does not intend to slacken now, but to retain it by hard work. He further spoke well of all the Negro actors in the European field. We learned also that he had played the leading part in getting Negro performers on certain circuits in America, one of them being the Columbia wheel. He said that he was the first Negro to play with an all-white chorus before him at the Gaiety Theatre in Washington, D. C., and that while playing at the Columbia Burlesque in Chicago he tried to get other Negroes on the wheel, but the management thought it would not pay. Later they took his advice. It paid!

Two other facts show that Johnny Hudgins has really arrived as a Parisian star. The original of his lithograph has found its way into the Jockey Bar, a famous cosmopolitan resort on the Boulevard Montparnasse; and the white performers are imitating his "Wah-Wah" song in the night clubs. On his opening night he received many cablegrams of congratulations from well-known artists, among them being Dorothy Gish and the Four Harmony Kings.

Hudgins says that he is taking steps to stop his imitators. "I wouldn't mind," he said, "if they would give me credit and put my name on their programs, as Josephine Baker has done."

In his scrap-book is also a letter from the manager of the Ambassadeurs, who speaks of him in the highest terms, and says that he is ready to have him back at any time.

As to Mrs. Hudgins, who was formerly on the stage, she is one of the best dressed women in Paris. And this, like the above, is no stage blarney.

In the scrap-book are pictures of Mr. and Mrs. Hudgins as they appeared in several of the Paris dailies. Mrs. Hudgins was snapped in the paddock at Longchamps at the last Grand Prix. This last is the height of ambition of almost every woman who goes to the Grand Prix, for in addition to being the most famous race of the year, it is also the dress parade of this center of fashion. The elite of Europe is present. Could such a thing have happened in a cer-

tain other country three thousand miles away? Would Mrs. Hudgins, with all her charm, ever be noticed? We wonder, we wonder!

Accompanied by Mr. Hudgins' secretary and interpreter, Sidney Garner of 6 Rue du Galais, Mr. and Mrs. Hudgins can be seen from time to time taking a spin along the Champs Elysees or shopping on the Grand Boulevard in their splendid Renault of the latest model.

All of which is a long way from being a page at $5 a week a little over ten years ago.

LONDON LIKES 'SHOW BOAT.'

Queue of Women Waits All Night and Day for Gallery Seats.

Wireless to THE NEW YORK TIMES.

LONDON, May 3.—"Show Boat," with Edith Day, Paul Robeson and other Americans in the cast, received an enthusiastic reception tonight at the Drury Lane Theatre, where it succeeded "The Desert Song."

A queue of women had waited all night and all days to make sure of getting gallery seats, but the audience was representative of wealth and fashion as well as persistence. Edith Day's acting and Paul Robeson's singing of "Old Man River" were outstanding features of the production, which seems likely to have a long run here.

—— Johnny Hudgins ——

European Theatrical Managers Ask Irvin C. Miller To Produce New Show

Berlin Wants Race Production By Famous Producer to Resemble "Models"

By CHAPPIE GARDNER

NEW YORK, Jan. 26.—Representative bookers from three European theatrical centers called on Irvin C. Miller at his studio here last week and asked him to put on a show for Berlin, to be put on over there just as soon as Mr. Miller can put it into shape. The foreign agents explained that the people of their country have heard lots of his shows, particularly the "Brownskin Models," and want a revue like this. Mr. Miller explained that the ten new shows now being produced required much of his time, but he invited the gentlemen to look at his "All Girlie" show now in rehearsal and which opens next week out of town. This show, a decided novelty, appeared at once. A flat offer was made to Mr. Miller for this new production of all girls—comediennes, songsters, dancers.

Mr. Miller is considering the offer, which guarantees 60 weeks and a probable European tour.

JOHNNY HUDGINS NEWEST PARIS SENSATION NOW

One Time Baltimore Stage Hand Accepts Contract With Paramount Theatre

MRS. HUDGINS BEST DRESSED PARIS GIRL

Paris Picture Papers Snap Her In The Paddock At Long Champs Races

PARIS., (By J. A. Rogers)—Each year some colored person from across the big pond somehow manages to find himself or herself the centre of attraction in this gay city by the Seine.

There has been Florence Mills, and there are Al Brown, Josephine Baker and others.

Now the spotlight is turned on Johnny Hudgins, he of the songless song and the frisky feet—Moo-sieed Djonny 'Eudjeens, as the Parisians call him. Already the Johnny Hudgins "Wah-Wah dolls" are on sale on the grand boulevards, and are finding themselves into the boudoirs of the fair Parisiennes.

Hudgins is a star of the Moulin Rouge this season in its new production—Paris Aux Etoiles—one of the most gorgeous and expensive productions in the history of the Parisian music halls. While starring at the Ambassadeurs with Miss June, noted English comedienne, last May, the manager of the Moulin Rouge,, M. Pierre Foucret, saw him and at once offered him an engagement at his theatre at a salary that runs into five figures weekly now that the franc is 25 to the dollar.

350 In Cast

Some 350 persons are in the cast, and a seat on the main of the Moulin Rouge costs 70 francs, which at the current rates of wages would be about six dollars in America. And at that seats must be engaged long in advance.

The last star at the Moulin Rouge was the noted Mistinguett, hence to be a star at this theatre means that one is a top-notcher.

Appears Nine Times

Hudgins appears nine times in the evening, receiving generous applause, even though applause is rare in the French theatre. With his droll make-up; his huge, warty shoes; his supple, slippery feet, and his songless "Wah-Wah" song he simply captivates his audience.

In one scene he appears as an ultra-dandy dressed in smart-fitting

Bert Williams' Estate Appraised

Entire Gross Amount of $34,521 Goes to His Widow

The estate of the late Bert Williams, world-famous comedian, has been appraised at $34,521.

This was revealed Friday, when the estate was appraised for transfer tax purposes, six years after the death of the comedian. The above figure is the gross amount of the estate; the net amount is $18,390.

— Late Bert Williams —

The entire estate was left to his widow, Mrs. Charlotte Williams. The total amount of his debts were $2,997, of which $1,000 was due Helen Rowland, white, his publicity manager. He owed $160 for valet service.

The laugh king's cash amounted to $26,566 and since his death his estate received $6,762 as royalties from the Columbia Graphophone Machine Company.

Egbert Austin Williams, who was for many years the senior member of the song and dance team of Williams and Walker, died March 4, 1922.

Theatrical - 1928.
Individual Troupes, etc.

NEGRO DANCER IS BARRED FROM VIENNA THEATER

London, February 3.—(AP)—A Vienna dispatch to the Exchange Telegraph company says that the city council has forbidden the Ronacher theater to allow Josephine Baker, American negro dancer, to give performances. The reason for the council's action is that the new theater manager has not been granted the necessary stage concession.

Recently Vienna police were obliged to guard the dancer, who had been threatened by university students. The students declared they would prevent negro performers from playing in Vienna.

COLORED STARS HAVE RUINED GERMANY

NEW YORK, N. Y., Feb. 8—(ANP)—When questioned as to why so few colored theatrical personages made their appearances and successes in Berlin and other German cities, Herr Norbert Salter, one of the leading booking agents of Germany, who was here in conference with Al White, manager of the All-Southern Collegiates football team, seeking colored soccer teams to go abroad, said:

"Colored stars have ruined their own future in Germany. They agree to appear for a stated price, and when success comes, instead of living up to the terms of their contract for the life of the contract, they seek to hold up the producers, embarrassing them by not going on. This has occurred several times to my knowledge, each time the producer agreeing to raise until he was exasperated. Refusal to comply with the demands for more money, forced the colored stars to go on according to their agreement. Now the prices are so cheap, first class colored stars will not accept the rates offered them."

Mr. Salter originally intended taking a soccer team back to Germany with him, but on the advice of Mr. White, would not sign the teams now playing around New York as they would be completely outclassed by the white teams that they would meet.

N.Y. TIMES
FEB 4 1928

MAYOR TO SEE NEGRO PLAY.

Walker to Attend Premiere Here of 'Meek Mose' on Monday.

Mayor Walker and a party of friends will see "Meek Mose," the initial offering in this city of a negro repertory company, on Monday night at the Princess Theatre. Frank Wilson, a negro actor, who has appeared in the Pulitzer Prize Play, "In Abraham's Bosom," and is now playing the leading rôle in "Porgy," is the author of "Meek Mose." The production will be under the auspices of Lester A. Walton, formerly head of the Lafayette Stock Company in Harlem.

If the enterprise is successful, the group will be incorporated under the name of the Negro Theatre, it is said. Its object is to represent different phases of negro life. Wilson's play, which is having its preliminary performances this week in Philadelphia, is said to be based on incidents in the oil fields of Texas. The leading players will be Charles H. Moore, Laura Bowman, Lawrence Criner and Alston Burleigh. George MacEntee and Jasper Deeter will direct the play.

"New York City is particularly proud of the culture of its negroes," Mayor Walker said yesterday, "for it is in this city with its large negro population and its wonderful opportunities that the genius of this race finds its best expression. This is especially true in the theatre, which is, after all, the real mirror of life. I feel a distinct pride in so sincere an effort as this movement, and I hope that the Negro Theatre will become one of our permanent dramatic institutions."

Others who will be present at the opening will be Otto H. Kahn, Rouben Mamoulian and members of the Theatre Guild organization.

LAYTON-JOHNSTONE WOULD BE BRITISH

Afro-American Baltimore, Md.

Vaudeville Team In London Applies For English Citizenship 2-18-28

LONDON, England.—J. Turner Layton and Tandy Johnstone, famous vaudeville team formerly from New York City, have both applied for British citizenship. A five year residence is obligatory.

These two young men left America about three years ago and have been the rage in London ever since, drawing fabulously high salaries at their regular engagements in addition to being featured at the private homes of the nobility and wealthy at private receptions.

English laws forbid American accepting contracts here or any type of performance which can be done by Englishmen.

Mr. Layton, whose wife and little daughter are in New York City where he paid a visit last fall to see them, is the son of the late Prof. Layton, famous Metropolitan A. M. E. Church choral director and head of music in the public schools of Washington, D. C., for many years. His mother, the late Mrs. Julia Mason Layton, was also active in the civic, religiuos and charitable organizations of the city.

Mr. Johnstone, who was formerly a chiropodist in New York City, was also over on a flying visit last spring. He has a wife in Harlem. He was a poupular figure in the social life of this section until he left for abroad.

JO BAKER IS ACCLAIMED IN LONDON SHOW

Defender, Chicago Ill.

Artists Make Brilliant Performance 2-18-28

London, England, Feb. 17.—Under the patronage of the lords and nobles of Westminster, Race artists in Europe appeared in a benefit matinee performance in aid of the mayor of Westminster's flood relief fund at the London Pavilion recently.

This array of talent presented one of the most remarkable shows ever seen on the stage in England. There was a star even among this collection of varied and colorful acts, and it was Josephine Baker, who was rushed by airplane from Paris to keep the engagement. It was Miss Baker's first time in England.

To express their appreciation of the welcome and hospitality shown them, these artists willingly accepted the invitation of the honorable lord mayor to perform.

Greatest Ever in England

"The matinee was one of the most remarkable performances I have ever seen," writes Harner Swaffer, who is the most critical reviewer in England. Speaking the exhibition, Swaffer said:

"For more than three hours Negroes of all kinds had been doing their turns—singing, dancing, playing saxophones, cracking jokes. Some wore stylish morning coats, tall hats and diamond rings. Alberta Hunter came all the way from Monte Carlo to sing the 'blues.'

"When Josephine Baker appeared she sat on a grand piano, in a beautiful rose-pink dress and bejeweled sort of nightcap, with long dazzling earrings, and sang 'Purty Little Baby.'

"Miss Baker, changing her dress for the Charleston, put on an ostrich-feather sort of a skirt and then made faces and grimaced while she danced. She has fire and vim, and she can wiggle her body until it looks like breaking."

Artist on Program

George Garner, tenor, of Chicago, U. S. A., rendered several solos. Others taking part included the South Before the War company, under the direction of John Payne; Southern Serenaders, from the same company; Hatch and Carpenter, from the Lido club; Miss Hattie King Reavis and Russell and Vivian.

Also Leslie Hutchinson, Southern trio, William Garland and Eddie Emmerson, Jim and Jack, Royal Hawaiian octet, Scott and Whaley, Leon Abbey and his jazz band, the Three Eddies, Jackson and Blake, Four Harmony Kings, Williams and Taylor and Noble Sissle.

Irvan Browning writes that this affair, easily the most brilliant ever staged in London, was supported by every artist in Europe with the exception of Layton and Johnstone.

The relief fund drive was instituted after the overflow of the Thames river, causing thousands of homes to be destroyed and families to be destitute in the Westminster section. Councillor Jacques Abady, the lord mayor of the city, invited the actors to take part in the benefit show.

Headliner In London

3/2/28

Noble Sissle, noted composer and star of "Shuffle Along" and "Chocolate Dandies," is appearing as a headliner in all the leading music halls of London and the English provinces. Sissle has been royally received by the English and he is assisted at the piano by Harry Revel. He will produce a mammoth show in London in the very near future and he is now writing a show for Josephine Baker.

Returns To Harlem Wearing $100,000 In Diamonds And Fur Coat That Cost $5000

Ruth Bayton Sailed Friday For Paris After Ten Days Visit Here—To Join Foiles Bergere

Courier — Pittsburg Pa.
2-11-28

By FLOYD J. CALVIN

NEW YORK, Feb. 9.—Josephine Baker isn't the only colored chorine who has found fame and fortune in Europe. Ruth Virginia Bayton, born in Virginia and reared in Philadelphia returned to the United States ten days ago for a two weeks' visit and casually told this writer at 80 Edgecombe avenue that between May, 1926, when she sailed from New York and a few days ago, when she returned, she made $200,000 on the European stage. Theatrical circles in America have long been agog over Miss Bayton's success as a star at the Theatre Les Westen in Berlin, where she made a hit similar to that of Josephine Baker at the Foiles Bergere in Paris. Miss Bayton wears jewels, which have fairly stunned Harlem, valued at $100,000, has an ermine wrap valued at $5,000, and a mink coat that cost $3,500. Pretty good for one who was once an ordinary chorine with "Dixie to Broadway" and "Plantation Revue."

Ruth Bayton, howev r, takes her success lightly. She is the most unaffected of all the stage celebrities I have interviewed. Asked about her dancing, which is really what put her in the circles of the affluent, she said: "I do the Charleston and the Black Bottom—mostly eccentric dancing." She sailed Friday night for Paris, where she has a year's contract with the Foiles Bergere where Josephine Baker leaped into fame.

Josephine Baker and Miss Bayton left America at about the same time. Miss Bayton's success has been equally as sensational, only she hasn't done some of the things that would get her name on the front pages like Josephine. Miss Bayton played a year and five months in Berlin, then went to Madrid, Spain, and from Madrid to Paris. She was with the late Florence Mills four and a half years before she ventured abroad. She is a niece of Dr. George B. Bayton of Philadelphia and also of Andrew Stevens, the Quaker City ex-banker and legislator.

If you want to see a sight you will long remember, see Ruth Bayton wearing that $100,000 worth of diamonds. They will "knock your eye out." The New York Times a week ago carried her picture in its rotogravure section.

Miss Bayton sailed Friday on the Acquatania on her return trip to Paris.

UNCLE DUD WRITES OF OLD STARS

Pittsburg Courier
3/3/28

By S. H. DUDLEY

I was just wondering how many of the present day amusement seekers and theatre-goers know the following great STARS, and what they did to gain fame.

Billy Kersands was the world's greatest and most widely known Colored minstrel. His neat soft-shoe dancing and his big mouth made him famous. Williams and Walker, Bert and George. Bert Williams was the greatest comedian of all times and will live forever as there are thousands of records made that you might hear him. George Walker was the fashion plate and matinee idol and shrewd business man. It was he who made the name of Williams and Walker famous. Earnest Hogan gained fame over night by writing, "All Coons Look Alike To Me." This song was a national hit. I remember when I was traveling with the "Original Nashville Students" 'way back in 1899, when we were playing all one-night stands. Every time I would pass a little white child, it would start singing "All Coons Look Alike To Me," and those who could not sing would whistle it. Hogan was a great actor. I remember when he headlined in vaudeville; he sang "Emancipation Day," and when he finished the song instead of dancing the chorus he pantomimed it so real that you could just imagine you were looking at "Emancipation Parade." Cole and Johnson, the original Bob and Billy, of the old trip to Coontown fame. These two actors were among the first to produce a Colored musical comedy, and were good song writers also. Billy Johnson died. Bob Cole was smart in joining hands with J. Rosmond Johnson and still retained the name and fame already made. Rosmond proved a wonderful foil for Bob as he (Rosmond) was a finished musician and wrote many songs. Some will live forever. They also starred in the "Sho' Fly Regiment" and "Red Moon." Both shows were hits. Smart and Williams, Walter and George, were stars in the original Isham Octoroons and were song writers also. The most popular songs they wrote were "No Coon Can Come Too Black For Me," and "I Guess That Will Hold You For A While." Both of these songs were hits. Walter Smart was the neatest and best straight man we have ever had. George Williams was witty and funny and was the first comedian playing the leading comedy role without using cork.

All of the above named artists were stars and each had his own peculiarity and above all were original, each in his own line. You did not find the sameness in these men that you find in the present-day actors. If time and space would allow me I could go on saying good things about these men until I would fill this entire paper, saying what they have done to make it possible for the present-day actor. I simply made it short, but wanted you to know what they stood for and why they stood out as Colored actors.

Of *Earth* (Macaulay), a modernistic play of negro life by Em Jo Basshe, we cannot speak enthusiastically. Here the theories of the radical theater are used to create mass movement on the stage as an unknown negro village sways between voodooism and Christianity. Of course reading is a poor test of production merits. On the stage the text may well reveal unexpected virtues. But in the closet *Earth* is crude and monotonous. What is interesting is the honest endeavor to build a play on the rhythms of negro life. What the drama lacks is a strong, significant central character.

"Meek Mose" at Lafayette Direct From Broadway Run

By far the most interesting announcement in recent months is that of the presentation of "Meek Mose" at the Lafayette Theatre next week. "Meek Mose" is a splendid comedy drama of colored life written by Frank Wilson. Since the opening night the play has made a deep impression on those who have seen it.

Some of the finest of our actors take part in it. Among them are Laura Bowman, Sidney Kirkpatrick, J. Lawrence Criner whose work with the old Lafayette Players established them in the ranks of the foremost colored actors.

"Meek Mose" is the story of a colored community in the town of Mexia, Texas, who are forced to give up their homes and live in the "gut." The different manner in which the colored people who faced the ruin of their homes and businesses acted towards the oppressive measures of the white authorities makes "Meek Mose" a tense and gripping story which provides a splendid evening's entertainment.

The management of the Lafayette Theatre announces that the play will be presented exactly as on Broadway, with the same splendid cast and scenery. Seats will be reserved, the prices ranging from 50 cents to $1.65. The tickets are now on sale at the box-office at the Lafayette Theatre.

"Meek Mose' 'is the best of the recent efforts to present dramas of colored life on the stage, and as such it should have a real appeal to our people.

Ethel Waters's show, "Africana," is passed up by the reporters as an error. Most of them, bored to death by 10 o'clock at the opening, went up the street from the Adelphi to the Four Cohans to see Jolson. Miss Waters's management took one laugh from the populace, however, by running a big advertisement Tuesday to imply that the advent of the show forced the Shuberts to bring in Jolson to strengthen the "opposition." And a second laugh by charging $5 a seat Sunday night.

Theatrical - 1928

Individual Treatment

Lewis Brings Up Heavy Artillery and Lays Waste Claims of S. Tutt Whitney

Amsterdam News, New York, Feb. 22, 28

Former Dramatic Critic and Associate Editor of Messenger Magazine in Brilliant Reply to Entertainer Proves Knowledge of Existing Conditions

WHITNEY DISTRUSTS HIS PEOPLE

The Following Article Is One of the Best Contributions on Negro Theatricals Ever Made to a Newspaper and the Dramatic Editor of The Amsterdam News Takes Pride in Presenting It

By THEOPHILUS LEWIS

A few weeks ago I got up in meeting and delivered a brief but somewhat peppery discourse on the shortcomings of Negro actors. I charged the majority of them with being unpatriotic, incompetent in their calling and degrading to the cultural life of the race. Promptly Salem Tutt Whitney, a veteran of the stage, rose from the seat of authority to give me a cuff on the ear and put me in my place. He gave me to understand that the next time I speak out of turn I won't get off so light, and he emphasizes his warning with ominous glances in the direction of his old but still serviceable rattan. Mr. Whitney's warning fails to quiet me. After stuffing a sofa pillow under my shirt and inserting a copy of Oliver M. Saylor's "Our American Theatre" in the seat of my breeches, I again rise in meeting to give colored actors Hail Columbia.

For the time being I will concentrate on Mr. Whitney. By selecting Mr. Whitney for the spotlight I am giving the Negro theatre better than an even break. He was won success, as success goes on the Negro stage; he is familiar with the history of colored show business, and he is able to set his opinions down in clear and forceful writing. Not many colored actors possess either his ability or his background. He is not the best our stage has produced. A few talented individuals have surpassed him. But he is so far above the average that the average is flattered when he is selected as a representative of the profession.

Let us take a closer view of Mr. Whitney; not to compare him with his fellow members of the profession this time, but to test the accuracy of his opinions and the soundness of their implications. What kind of man and thinker do they reveal—a man of professional acumen? Yes, to a limited extent. A man who understands the relationship existing between the several departments of the theatre and their relative importance, a man who further realizes the significant part the theatre should play in the cultural life of his people? Not at all. Instead, we see a man who doubts both the ability of his profession and the equality of his people with other races, a man with a close horizon and almost void of patriotism. If it is a true close-up of a man who stands high above the average of his profession—and I propose to show by his own words that it is—what must be the mean of that profession? Obviously, the profession as a whole must be degradingly stupid and vicious in its influence on the race.

DOUBTS ACTOR'S ABILITY.

I say Mr. Whitney doubts the ability of his profession. "When," he asks, "did ever the actor force the public to accept a form of entertainment it did not desire?" The answer is every actor who creates a following does it. For example, a certain actor used to make a big hit by leading a trained mule on the stage. Did the actor in question wait for the public to hold mass meetings and demand that act? Or did he think it up himself, spring it on his first audience as a big surprise and make them like it?

Big reforms are the result of successive slight innovations. The trouble with the Negro stage is only a few actors seem capable of inventing one idea, and the vast majority are capable of none. The actor just referred to apparently exhausted his brain power when he conceived the idea of leading a mule on the stage. If he isn't pulling the same stuff yet, the mule must be dead.

The actor who is a helpless puppet in the hands of producers and theatre owners is simply an incompetent actor. The actor who has created a following can always get consideration when he suggests an innovation. He can always go to a manager and say "I always fill your house, do I not? Nothing I ever suggested has proved a flop. Why do you assume this new idea of mine is bound to go wrong? Besides, if it doesn't pay off I can go back to the old line." If the manager knows the actor has always been a box office success in the past he will be ready enough to listen to him, for the manager has only one aim—to make money. In this way a comedian can advance from one novelty to another. The only condition is he must be an actor—not merely a public entertainer.

There is still another way in which an actor with a following can capitalize his ability for the benefit of his ideals. He can demand increased salary or box office percentages until he becomes substantial enough to produce on his own. He will then be in direct contact with his audience and in a position to scale up the quality of his amusement as fast as his public can keep pace with him. I am assuming, of course, that the actor has vision and ideals as well as a following. Such an actor is by no means a marionette which must jump or stand still according to how the managers pull the strings. To say that actors like Al. Jolson, Eddie Cantor, Walter Hampden and the Barrymores are puppets in the hands of playwrights and producers is sheer nonsense.

The reason why colored actors seldom reach the point where they can influence managers effectively is because very few of them have a real following. At this moment I can think of only one actor and one actress who have anything distinctive to offer. The rest are on the same level of inferiority. What Dodo Green did last week Emmet Anthony is doing this week and Slim Henderson will do next week. Week after week brings a continuous succession of mediocre and bad actors grouping through the Negro theatre, all hoofing, singing blues and spieling 'coon patter in practically the same way and hardly one in a hundred attempting anything novel enough to distinguish him from the others in the slightest degree. Since all are equally lacking in distinction, their audiences have little reason to prefer one above another. This condition naturally gives managers the upper hand. They do not have to face the problem of engaging actors with original and peculiar talents which appeal to definite groups of the public. They only have to put different names on the billboard. Any name will do except the one headlined last week or the week before. The show will be the same anyhow.

Realizing they are at a disadvantage, colored actors become more and more timid and distrustful. Because they are unable to influence managers or impress the public, they doubt that it is possible for any other actor to do it. Thus the morale of the entire profession is weakened until even outstanding actors like Mr. Whitney admit they are mere puppets dependent on the whims of more competent people outside the profession.

LACKS PATRIOTISM.

I say Mr. Whitney distrusts his people and that his patriotism is only skin deep. He says: "If . . . we attempted to enact a portrayal of Toussaint l'Ouverture we would most likely have to make the great patriot do the black bottom to get him over."

This is an amusing statement. Boiled down, it means that American Negroes are a race of fools. Worse than that, it means they are almost as deficient in race pride and self-respect as Negro actors.

It has been said often enough that we are a humorous and laugh-loving people. Those of us whose mental age is somewhat higher than that of the infants who regularly patronize colored musical shows prefer the movies. Like most healthy Americans, we enjoy the antics of Charlie Chaplin, the cross eyes of Ben Turpin and the pie throwing of slap-stick comedies. But Milton Sills does not have to wear 30-inch shoes to get over with us, Douglas Fairbanks does not have to sock his lady love with a huckleberry pie to make us appreciate him, nor does Greta Garbo have to put a tack in John Gilbert's chair to make us like the picture. On what grounds does Mr. Whitney assume that while we like to see the romance and heroism of white people we only want to see our own portrayed as fools?

I do not think Mr. Whitney took much thought before he set that remark down in black and white. But, as we psychologists know, it is by their involuntary slips of the tongue or pen that men reveal their deepest feelings. Deep in his heart Mr. Whitney believes that Negroes are an ignoble race whose members are convinced of their own inferiority. He believes we are so bereft of a sense of the fitness of things that a general doing the black bottom leading an army doing the Charleston is the only thing we can appreciate. He believes that achievement, ambition, love and heroism, to say nothing of dignity and refinement, would not appeal to us. In short, he believes that Cole Blease is right.

Mr. Whitney's attitude is typical of the profession. Men who habitually disparage their group are naturally unpatriotic. Patriotism is the result of pride in race or place of birth. No man can be proud of a race which he believes consists mainly of fools. Negro actors, believing their group cannot appreciate anything but bufoonery, are consequently unpatriotic in philosophy and disloyal in conduct. They are ever ready to desert a colored audience for a chance to play before a white audience. I know a colored producer who says any white producer can get any member of his companies at any time. In a way, their conduct is at least logical. If I felt the same way they feel, that my race was a race of idiots without a single noble quality, I would be unpatriotic too. I would get a barrel or two of hair straightener and a couple of hogsheads of skin bleach and claim to be a Malay fresh from Malaria.

So long as men like Mr. Whitney comprise the main personnel of our stage—and I say again he represents its best thought and ideals—it will never catch up with the general progress of the race. Our stage needs new blood, new ideas, new ideals, new men and women. It needs young actors with courage enough to break away from the blackface tradition and the burlesque show technique of the Uncle Toms who have dominated it for twenty years. It needs young actors with intelligence enough to amuse an audience without disguising themselves as mandrills. It needs young actors with the vision to see that pathos as well as mirth, wisdom as well as folly, sadness as well as song, and poignancy as well as joy have a right to call the theatre their home. As long as the handkerchief heads who now control the theatre remain in power nothing but imbecility will ever get a hand.

VIENNA OPPOSES DANCES OF BAKER

Clerical Leader Terms Nude Appearance Of Negro Dancer As Scandalous

VIENNA, Feb. 25.—(AP)—Josephine Baker, negro dancer, whose appearance in Vienna on March 1 in her exotic nude dances has created sharp controversy throughout Austria, was the subject of a long debate in the Austrian National Parliament today.

Dr. Jerzabeck, a leader of the clerical party, and a practicing physician for 25 years, declared that he was opposed to her appearance, not because of her color or nationality, but because she appeared before the public "dressed only in a postage stamp."

"Moreover," he contended, "her dances are devoid of any real art, consisting only of grotesque distortions and writhing grimaces."

Dr. Jerzabeck complained of public posters all over Vienna showing the dancer attired in only a string of pearls and a few ostrich feathers "like a congo savage."

"It is scandalous," he shouted "that we are asked to pay 100,000 shillings to see nudity when a hundred thousand workmen are walking the streets of Vienna searching for employment and food."

The Social-Democrats, who rule the city of Vienna, replied sarcastically:

"Then see to it that none of your bourgeoisie friends see her dances."

James B. Lowe Taking London By Storm

LONDON, England, Feb. 23.—(By The Staff Correspondent of The A. N. P.)—James B. Lowe, star of Carl Laemmle's elaborate production, "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which is showing at the London Pavilion in connection with "South Before the War," a great colored ensemble of artists which Lowe heads, is the real sensation of London. Packed audiences greet Lowe at every appearance.

His popularity on the stage is rivalled by that in the social life of this city. Saturday, Lowe, with Her Grace The Countess Lindsay of the Byrnes was the guest of honor at Clapham Drill Hall, a community center for poor children. Lady Simon has taken an unusual interest in the movie star and has asked him to give her facts of in-

human treatment of Negroes in America.

As Jimmie Smith, Lowe's manager, puts it when questioned as to when they would leave for the states, "Lowe does not know when he is going to return to America. We have been banqueted in the finest west-end hotels and cafes in London and so far we have not met with any prejudice whatever. Mr. Lowe has been received so cordially on and off the stage."

The newspapers have been unanimous in claiming Lowe's work as really artistic and above criticism.

NEW YORK NEWS

ISSUE OF

JUN 3 1928

Noble Sissle, colored actor and composer, returns here next fall from England, where he has been acting in vaudeville six months.

Miller & Lyles Headed for Broadway in Their Latest Musical Comedy Offering

Critics Wax Enthusiastic Over "Keep Shufflin'," Underlined for Big Opening at Daly's Theatre next Monday Night

MAUDE RUSSELL TO THE FORE

Colored New York Thrown Into a Fever of Anticipation, as Nothing Outstanding Has Been Produced by Anybody Since the Palmy Days of "Shuffle Along"

What has been called the Negro cycle of theatricals is expected to have its culmination on Monday evening, February 27, when Miller and Lyles, noted comedians, will appear as the principals in the cast of "Keep Shufflin' "—said to be the largest of Negro productions ever staged. This new vehicle is the result of fourteen months of intensive preparation and is being sponsored and presented by Con Conrad, one of the outstanding composers and lyricists who has contributed many musical scores to Broadway productions. "Keep Shufflin' " will play, it is expected, for a period of many months at Daly's 63rd Street Theatre. This playhouse has received a stamp of successful operation since the advent there of "Shuffle Along," which was the turning point of Negro theatricals in America since the coming of the present generation.

According to the expressed opinion of one of the leading theatrical critics, the present Negro cycle in America will come to an end after the presentation of any production which is as elaborately presented as "Show Boat" or "Golden Dawn," both of which have large units of Negro performers in the respective casts. For some years the Negro player has been deprived of an opportunity to demonstrate that she or he possesses ability equal to that of the foremost Nordic stars. Con Conrad has openly expressed the opinion that the numerous stars and supplementary players whom he has culled for the production are every bit as gifted as the cream of Nordic artistes. Furthermore, Mr. Conrad, in order to demonstrate this point, has cast in "Keep Shufflin' " every available player of outstanding merit to interpret the book. When one reflects upon the fact that many members of the cast of the new Miller and Lyles musical comedy have been stars in their own right, it is at least a substantial omen for the success of the production.

In addition to the two noted comedians, the cast includes John Vigal and Clarence Robinson, who have long been favorites in the world of Negro theatricals, and many appraisers of dramatic worth have stated that they are the leading juveniles of their race. Byron Jones, whom Philadelphia critics likened in point of skill to the famous Jack Donohue, has been allotted several important units in which to demonstrate his wonderful dancing skill. George Battler Lee, Hazel Sheppard, Gilber Allegretti Anderson also ha given a real opportunity to eir talents. Josephine Hall, too, t prets an important role and has been equipped with far finer material than was her lot in any of the productions in which she appeared in the past. Jean Starr created a furore in "Keep Shufflin' " when the vehicle had its initial triumph at Gibson's Theatre in Philadelphia, where it is now playing prior to its presentation in New York. Miss Starr has been given the assignment of rendering the hit number in the show, a composition the music and lyric of which were both framed by Con Conrad personally. This number is titled "Give Me the Sunshine" and elicited no less than six curtain calls on the opening night at Gibson's.

Already the New York newspapers have commented upon the work of Maud Russell, and these various commentators have voiced the opinion that this girl is undoubtedly headed for unusual popularity. It is a coincidence that when Florence Mills made her first great impression in theatredom, in the memorable "Shuffle Along," she had the same spot in that show which Maude Russell fills in "Keep Shufflin'." The little "blackbird's" instantaneous success was repeated in Philadelphia when Maude Russell sang "Harlem Rose," which is another Conrad composition, with special lyrics by Gladys Rodgers, who, by the way, is rated by Mr. Conrad as one of the greatest lyrical finds in contemporary songland. Another performer of great popularity and skill is Evelyn Keyes, who has been

CON CONRAD.

Mr. Conrad, Who Knows His Broadway From the Thirties to 59th Street, Feels That He Has a Hit In "Shufflin' Sam."

teamed with Byron "Scrappy" Jones in a dance specialty in the first act. The number they are doing in "Keep Shufflin' " is called "Choc'Late Bar," a swift and melodious composition which is one of the seasations of the present Philadelphia engagement of Miller and Lyles' new musical comedy.

Con Conrad's long experience as a composer and lyricist has resulted in his taking out added musical insurance for the success of "Keep Shufflin'." Not contented with having contributed the finest of his new compositions to the vehicle, he has incorporated several numbers from the pen of Jimmy Johnson, who has won lasting fame as the composer of "Charleston"; "Fat" Waller and Clarence Todd are responsible for the other wonderful increments of the production, and Henry Creamer, together with Andy Razaf, have created the "punchy" lyrics.

The book of "Keep Shufflin' " was written by Flournoy Miller personally, and possesses a wealth of humor far exceeding the mirthful material of the past. Mr. Miller's imagination has been productive of some of the most humorous incidents ever seen behind footlights. The story is exceptionally unique and has a satirical theme based on the evils of Bolshevism. Miller and Lyles interpret the roles of Steve Jenkins and Sam Cook, respectively. Steve and Sam are particularly lazy by nature and scheme out a novel method to keep the world from working. They form what is called the "Equal Got League." The function of this organization is to give every citizen of the town an equal share of money, which is derived quite conveniently by blowing up a bank. After swimming in luxury for a number of days, Steve and Sam find that their plans have gone askew and that instead of the principals of the "Equal Got League" being practical they discover that everyone has too much money to work. The result is that the water works shuts down, no stores are open and business in general is at a standstill. This condition prevents anyone from spending the money he or she has acquired. Just how the whole scheme turns out will be a source of great mirth to those seeing "Keep Shufflin'," which has an extremely fast, surprising end.

"Keep Shufflin' " has an unusually large cast and both in point of number and the respective talents of the players it exceeds practically every production of its kind. It has the proportions of the largest of Broadway shows and in point of scenic effects, lighting and costuming it vies with the best production of the present theatrical season in New York. It should be mentioned that Jimmie Johnson and Thomas "Fat" Waller's orchestra, which supplies the musical background of "Keep Shufflin'," is made up of the pick of Negro musical artists. Jimmie Johnson and "Fat" Waller preside at the pit pianos and Battleax, the noted drummer, enlivens the proceedings with his antics and unusual percussion effects.

Jabbo Smith is behind the bugle and was a real sensation at Gibson's Theatre, where he shared the honors with many of the stars behind the footlights. There are twenty-two musical numbers in "Keep Shufflin'," and the production has as one of its features the Jubilee Singers and Dancers, among whom are Charles Lawrence, Herman Linsterino, Lloyd Mitchell, Howard Browne, George Battles, Joseph A. Willis, Burkie Jackson, Chris Gordon, Edwin Alexander, Sandy Brown and Kenneth Harris.

A veritable pageant of bronze beauty is represented in the ladies of the ensemble, who have been carefully selected not only for their pulchritude but also for their ability to step swiftly and surely. These dusky Dianas add considerable zest to the performance. They are Gussie Williams, Hazel Sheppard, Ethel Moses, Marie Buschell, Marion L. Tyler, Vivienne G. Brooks, Lila Brogden, Evelyn Irving, Gladyce Bronson, Hazel Coles, Gertrude Gaines, Vilet Speedy, Marie Dove, Mineola Phillips, Shirley Abbey, Jean Kane, Edna Ellington, Peggy Burnett, Paule MacDowell, Billie Rickmon, Marion Ford, Madeline Odlum, Olive Harrison, Byrdie Wallace and Clarice Egbert.

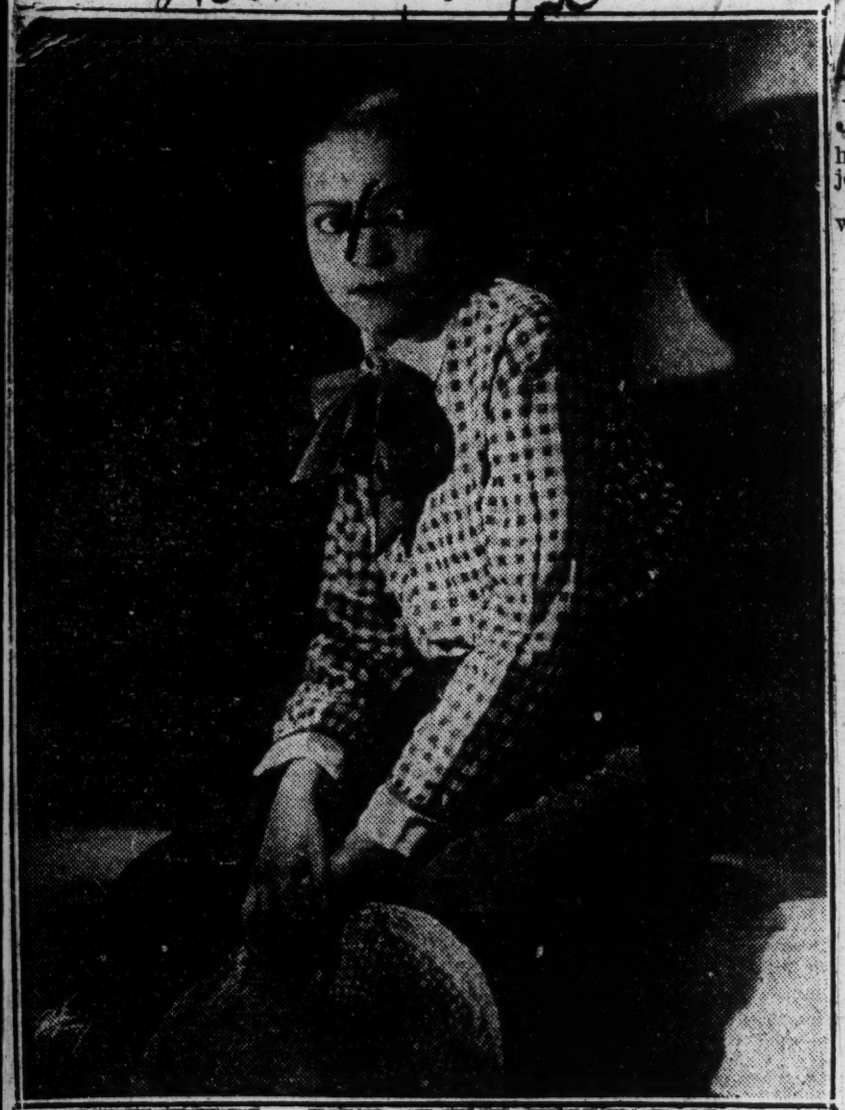
The opening night at Daly's 63d Street Theatre Monday evening, February 27, will be attended by the most brilliant gathering of first-nighters in the history of the theatre in New York. Members of the "400," leaders in civic and political life have already made their reservations for the event and many socially prominent in Harlem will also be in attendance when the curtain rises promptly at 8:30.

Theatrical-1928.

Individual Troupes, etc.

As The "Blackbird"

Tribune. Tr



THE LATE FLORENCE MILLS, one of the greatest actresses ever produced by the race, in whose memory members of the profession are endeavoring to build a home for actors in New York City. Miss Mills was born in Washington and attended public school here. A benefit performance for the memorial will be given at the Howard Theatre, Tuesday, May 8.

Successor of Bert Williams

A Sketch of the Celebrated Comedian, Johnny Hudgins, by the Paris Correspondent of The New York Amsterdam News

By ANDREW F. ROSEMOND

W/

JOHNNY HUDGINS was born in Baltimore, Maryland. He first started work as an elevator boy in a hotel. As far back as he can remember he was always interested in the theatre and he admits that he lost every job because "I would 'get off' too often to go to the show."

The desire of a stage career was uppermost in his mind. His parents, who were "church members," strenuously objected to this mode of earning a living, and he finally won the consent of his mother.

JOHNNY HUDGINS.

Mr. Hudgins has Gained the Greatest Acclaim of Any Colored Male Performer in Europe Since the Visit of Williams and Walker.

Johnny's first appearance on any stage was in Ford's Opera House (Baltimore). His first song was "Alexander's Rag-Time Band" (which is said to be Irving Berlin's first song hit) and his second was "Balling the Jack." His friends acclaimed him a "natural born actor" and very soon thereafter he was considered the best local comedian. After getting some stage experience locally he went to Pittsburgh with Drake and Walker's show. He laughed as he stated in his inimitable way: "I was so homesick and felt so lonely until I went back to Baltimore without notifying a SOUL." Amsterdam News

Later we find him leaving home again for his first opportunity with a big company. This time he journeyed to Indianapolis with the burlesque show called the "Monte Carlo Girls." Evidently he was a success, for he remained with this company for six years.

After this long engagement with this company he accepted a better contract with "Town Scandals" at the Star and Garter Theatre, Chicago. He remained with this show for the entire run of three years, closing with them at the Gaiety Theatre, Kansas City. 5-23-28

Sissle and Blake telegraphed him an offer. Immediately after the close of "Town Scandals" he joined "Bamville" in Chicago. This was followed by a contract with J. J. Shubert for "Artists and Models." By this time the name of Johnny Hudgins was well known. The Club Alabam' wisely secured the services of the genial comedian, where he remained for two and a half years as a star of this revue.

Lew Leslie next engaged him for the revue headed by the late darling of the stage, Florence Mills, at the Alhambra Theatre, Harlem. He sailed for London with this all-star aggregation. New York.

His European engagements have been one triumph after another. Although he left New York with a contract for eight weeks, on May 9 he will have finished two years of consecutive engagements at "big prices."

Although he has been imitated throughout Europe, he is still in great demand. (Josephine Baker, who did a "Johnny Hudgins" in the previous Folies Bergere Revue, is the only star to acknowledge the imitation on the program.) He has forced a number of performers to stop "Hudginsing," but still they continue.

Mr. Hudgins showed the writer a number of cables, letters and telegrams offering engagements before he left Paris for his Kit Kat Club engagement in London. One of the biggest managers in Berlin is anxious for him to begin an engagement there on May 20; William Morris offered him a twelve weeks' tour of the Publix Circuit, opening at the Paramount Theatre, New York City; the Folies Bergere wants him to star in its 1929 revue, and Lew Leslie cabled an offer for "Black Birds." He also has a tempting offer to operate and star in a very chic Paris night club.

His popularity can be attested by the number of letters he receives asking for pictures and autographed programs. It was a common occurrence for him to be "held up" at the stage door of the Moulin Rouge by a score of children, young men and women. Most of the children do not believe he "is the same funny man who made them laugh so much" when they see him without his "make-up."

Having looked through his large scrapbook and reading a number of criticisms proclaiming him "the greatest comedian since Bert Williams," I asked him if he knew his renowned predecessor. "I only saw Bert Williams once in my life, and that was at the Maryland Theatre, Baltimore," he said. He then spoke of some of the great performers of yesteryear.

He saw Ada Overton Walker, Black Patti, J. Lubrie Hill and Jolly John Larkins at the Holliday Theatre, Baltimore. Hudgins regrets that he never had a chance to see George Walker and Ernest Hogan.

The show which influenced him most and definitely decided his stage career was S. H. Dudley's "Doctor Beans From Boston," with Ada Overton Walker.

Besides being a famous comedian, Johnny Hudgins is noted for his affable disposition and his ability at acquiring the friendship of people in all walks of life. He knows that his present position in the theatrical world is not the "sum total" of a royal and easy road to stardom, but the result of perseverance and hard work. He is always ready to assist a fellow performer. His influence has secured engagements for several unknown artists in Europe.

Johnny Hudgins does not in the least feel his importance. He is too busy with his work and appreciating the joy of living.

From Chorus Girl to European Headliner

Amsterdam News
New York
5-2-28

The Amsterdam News Takes a Certain Pride in the Knowledge That One of Its Most Efficient Correspondents Happened to Be on the Ground When Another Star on the Theatrical Horizon Is on the Ascendency in Europe. Miss Ruth Bayton, Shown Above in Two Poses for this Paper, Has Taken the Center of the Spotlight in Paris, and While Josephine Baker Is Far From Being on the Wane, Miss Bayton's Work Is Looked Upon as More Artistic Than That of Miss Baker. J. A. Rogers Has Written a Most Entertaining Article on Miss Bayton in Today's Amsterdam News.

Theatrical-1928

Individual Troupes, etc.

MILLS ASS'N SEEKS PERMANENT HOME

NEW YORK, Sept. 6.—Seeking to definitely place itself in the ranks occupied by the white organizations, Actors' Equity and the American Artists and Actors' Association, the Florence Mills Theatrical Association went on the market this week in search of a building for national headquarters.

Temporarily abandoning the idea of building a home, the association is in position to purchase and remodel a dwelling into clubrooms, offices and first floor rental shops. This announcement came from Mrs. Irene Jordan, 45 West 127th street, secretary of the organization. She did not reveal the amount to be spent in the purchase; but it is believed to be about $5,000.

"For the first time since our organization following Miss Mills' death," Mrs. Jordan said, "we have begun to operate on a substantial business basis. For a number of weeks we accepted any contributor to the fund as a member. Now the annual membership fee has been set at $10 a year and results have been unusually gratifying since early in July."

Disclosing the immediate plans of the association, Mrs. Jordan declared that the ultimate aim is to build a protective body which will in time be associated with the Equity and the American Federation of Labor. She roundly scored producers, who, she says, are guilty of abandoning their companies and withholding salaries.

One of the added features of the organization will be an art theater section, seeking to uncover new dramatic talent and to encourage it in non-commercial presentations. A midnight benefit, similar to the series staged all over the country last year, will be given at the Howard Theater, Washington, early in September, according to the secretary. Two benefits previously planned at the house failed to materialize because of union interference. An agreement is being effected with the Lichtman chain, operators and donors of the playhouse.

N. Y. to See Opera With Colored Hero, Jazz Band

NEW YORK, Dec. 5—(ANP)—Since the World War, European artists and dramatists have been busy exploiting the change of scene incident to that conflict. The Negro has played no inconspicious part in the new makeup of European social map and, as a consequence, it has been impossible to overlook him and the situations brought about by his presence. Continental authors have found him not only a fruitful source of controversy, but of interest.

Everything that is significant, either in the Old World or the New World, is supposed to eventually reach this cosmopolitan city in some form or other. Thus a few weeks ago saw the premiere of a drama here, hitherto shown in London, whic hsought to expose how different social and economic forces exercised themselves in the romatntic relations of America Negro soldiers and French girls. favorable but restrained comment The play, "Goin' Home," received long. The picture of the Negro from the critics, but did not last hero, though patently touch in spots, was not of the conventional pattern.

Nevertheless, as a result of the more or less success of certain so-called Negro musical comedies, and of such drama, on Broadway, New York producers are willing to take a gamble on the public's assumed favorable disposition for the Negro, or the Negro theme, behind the footlights.

The startling announcement has therefore been made that in January, the Metropolitan Opera Company will present an opera which calls for a jazzz band on the stage, and whose hero is a Negro in love with a white girl. The Associated Press dispatch concerning this sensational departure, reads.

"The opera is 'Jonny Spielt Auf,' by Ernest Krenek, a young Austro-Czechish composer. During 1927 it traveled over central Europe, following its world premier in the staid old Neues theatre in Leipsic.

"The hero is Jonny Young, a American Negro, who has conquered Europe with his jazz band. He has not been long in Europe before he discovers that white people over there have different ideas about interracial love and courtships than they have in America.

Courts Opera Singer

"He courts a beautiful white opera singer, having as his rivals a composer and a celebrated violin virtuoso, both white. In the last act, which takes place in a large continental railroad station, Jonny falls under an express train and is killed. Aboard the train, it develops, are the opera singer and the composer, eloping to America. Suddenly the illuminated station clock becomes transformed to an immense globe, on which Jonny is perched—inviting all the world to join in an outpouring of jazz.

Musically, "Jonny Spielt Auf" while he leads the band." is said to be as sensational as is its plot.

Motor Car and Blues

"In it there are all sorts of sounds which have heretofore been regarded with horror by devotees of the opera. The roar and clatter of a railway station, for instance. a locomotive, the din and busle and always banging and crashing of a hotel lobby, a motor car—through the entire score, jazz jazz. Drums, trumpets—saxaphones, playing 'blues'!

"One of the most startling innovatoins. critics say, is a radio loud speaker, right there on the stage in plain view, broadcasting Jonny's jazz band.

" 'Fresh' (in the slangy sense), 'insolent', and 'abominable' are some of the expressions that critics any Spielt Auf' in Europe use in who have seen—and heard—'Jon describing it. The opera has its world premier in Leipsic in February, 1927. Thereafter it was produced in Berlin."

The young composer has been a pupil of Franz Sshreker and has lived in Venna, Berlin and Paris.

THE THEATERS

By PERCY HAMMOND

"Goin' Home," Another Good Play About the Feverish Life of the Colored Folk

"Goin Home," by Ransom Rideout. Presented by Brock Pemberton at the Hudson Theater with the following cast:

Lise	Barbara Bulgakov
Slim	John Irwin
Bill	Ralph Cullinan
Sergeant Durant	Arvid Paulson
Corporal Picot	Alexander Zaroubine
Commandant Juneste	Georges Renevant
Israel du Bois	Richard Hale
Tom	Brevard Burnett
Luke	Leo Bailey
Major Edward Powell	Russell Hicks
Samba Saar	Clarence Redd
Jake	Seifert C. Pyle
Bill	F. Barclay Trigg
Spuds	Ferdinand J. Acooe
Slick	J. William Maxwell
Walt	Frederick D. McCoy
Mose	Charles H. Brown
Chuck	Charles Benjamin
Banjo Eph	Fred H. Jennings
Buck	Ray Giles
Chip	Snippy Mason
Jim	Thomas Moseley

Synopsis: Act I.—Interior of Lise's Cafe. Early afternoon. Act II.—The same. That evening. Act III.—The same. Immediately afterward.

The play takes place in a cafe in a French seaport town after the signing of the Versailles Treaty.

THIS new war play comes to the theater wearing the ribbons of a victor in the recent Longmans Green-Drama League tourney. It wears them legitimately, for it is a serious though sentimental and sensational essay treating of a Negro problem fresh to the stage, at least. A sort of black "What Price Glory," it stimulated last evening's audience at the Hudson with its ingenious story, the excellent white and colored acting of its principal characters and its more or less graceful compromises with the necessities of the market. Shrewdly directed and produced by Brock Pemberton, one of the judges in the contest, it presented itself as a thoughtful and exciting entertainment, sturdy at times, feeble at others, but always something to look at and listen to.

* * *

Israel Du Bois, a yearning and idealistic New Orleans Negro, is shanghaied by the French into the Foreign Legion. Having fought well for the Tri-Color and won decorations for valor, he forgets his lowly Louisiana past and marries the white chatelaine of a cafe in Brest. Into this restaurant comes the young and handsome Major Powell, who of all things used to be Israel's pal and boss in the sunny South. While flirting with the comely proprietress the major learns with disgust of her miscegenation, and fortified with cognac, starts out to correct it. But while doing so he himself is captivated by the pretty siren; and, soldier-like, goes to her room. And not, as you may suppose, for a good purpose.

* * *

The product of this situation is more than you might suppose. Negro sol-

Richard Hale

In "Goin' Home"

diers, "goin' home," gather in a Brest cafe to sing and drink while waiting for the transports. Inspired by the flowing alcohol of the Republique, they are both merry and grim—intoning spirituals, shooting craps and discussing the plight of a Negro in a white man's world. A poetic and murderous Senegalese warrior dances a jungle lust-dance. Meantime you know that Major Powell will at any moment appear from the door of Lise's room and precipitate a race riot. This he does, and the ensuing hostilities are agitating, romantic and not to be reported in one of the better box office accounts. Israel, the Negro, is noble throughout, and so is Major Powell at the end. Between the both of them, as Mayor Walker would say, they killed a perfectly good Sengalese and went home regretting casually that they had done so. The play is rather square, and with its occasional cheating it should last.

* * *

Richard Hale, who, Kelcey Allen tells me, is Heywood Broun's brother-in-law, is tip-top as the colored hero—a confused and noble Negro who in the crisis shoots the wrong man. In a cast distinguished for keen impersonations I recommend particularly Miss Barbara Bulkakov as an overpowering French light o' love and Mr. Thomas Moseley as a sullen colored doughboy, fed up with the white man's racket. . . . "Goin' Home" deserves attention; and I think the second and third nighters will appreciate it more than the first.

RECORD STAR LEADS SNAPPY REVUE CALLED "STEAMBOAT DAYS"

9/15'28 Gateway Courier

The crowned Queen of the Blues, Bessie Smith, heads a snappy array of singing and dancing talent which is making its appearance at the Elmore this week under the caption of "Steamboat Days."

Bessie Smith gave a real demonstration of what might be called "Bluing the Blues" and was roundly applauded for her tuneful melodies. Her fame has spread not only as an exclusive Columbia record star, but as a footlight performer who is in a class by herself in her particular line.

An able cast completes the program, featured by such luminaries as Ethel Williams, Jack Gee, Nat Cash, Lloyd Hollis, Sam Davis, Bootsy Swan, Hackback and Millie Holmes.

A capacity house greeted the initial performance of "Steamboat Days," which incidentally is one of the best shows on the Majestic Theatrical Circuit.

The comedians were unusually clever, and the singing throughout was good.

The usual big midnight show is planned for Sunday.

Theatrical – 1928

Individual Troupes, etc.

WELL KNOWN WRITER NOTES RISE OF RACE STAGE FOLK

Pittsburgh Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa

Scribe Says Negro Actors Have Made Great Strides

By O. O. McINTYRE, 10/13/28
In his column "New York Day by Day."

NEW YORK, Oct. 11.—Few are conscious of the remarkable strides the Negro has made in the theater in the past few years. Ten years ago their histrionic ability was confined to a few dingy and abandoned burlesque theaters above 125th street in Harlem.

About six years ago they landed downtown as far as Sixty-second street, where Miller and Lyle wrote, produced and appeared in "Shuffle Along"—the first of the sepia shows to attract a white audience. It became a rage and made the two colored sponsors a neat sum.

Wistful Florence Mills with her flashing jet black eyes then appeared in a cabaret revue over the Winter Garden, and Broadway society packed the place. Her subsequent stardom in an all-colored show on Broadway and later triumphs in London and Paris are now theatrical history.

Two brown-skin shows had long runs on Forty-second street this season, appearing cheek by jowl with the best theatrical offerings. One was the dramatic and poignant "Porgy," which came back for a return engagement, and the other was Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds of 1928."

The latter brought out Aida Ward, called the successor to Florence Mills, and Adelaide Hall, another dusky singing sensation. Also Bill Robinson, an ebony tap dancer, whose nimble feet lifted him out of cheap vaudeville to a star commanding $1,400 a week. To see him tap dance up a pair of steps is a grand treat.

Paul Robeson is another distinguished actor coming out of what is known as the Smoke Era. There are a dozen cabaret revues in Harlem bringing nightly white audiences from downtown. What is impressive is the enthusiasm of the colored performer for the job.

Most Negro chorus girls are really octoroons and could pass for white in white shows. Some comedians are so light they wear burnt cork. There are also chorus girls with blonde and red hair, and all hair is straight.

PAUL ROBESON AND "SHOW BOAT"

Some weeks ago in this column a statement was printed concerning the differences which have arisen between Paul Robeson, the distinguished singer and actor, now in London, and the Actors' Equity Association of New York, in which the Equity side of the matter was presented at length. Now, through the courtesy of Deacon Johnson, who kindly provided a copy of the London Sunday Express which had been sent him by William H. Berry of the "Four Harmony Kings," who are also in London, it is possible to give Mr. Robeson's side of the case as told by him to Hannen Swaffer, and published in The Express on Sunday, October 7, last.

Mr. Swaffer's story is as follows:

By HANNEN SWAFFER

Paul Robeson, the colored singer, is again in the limelight. Sir Alfred Butt, resisting an injunction applied for by Mrs. Caroline Dudley Reagan, of New York, to restrain Robeson from acting at Drury Lane said: "If Mr. Paul Robeson is forced to leave the cast of "Show Boat' there is a possibility the run of the production may come to an end.

White members of the company feel very hurt by the phrase. One of them complained to me bitterly the other night. Mr. Robeson himself minimises his importance in the Drury Lane show. He pays a tribute to Edith Day.

Banned by Equity.

Robeson's affairs have caused talk on two continents. He will doubtless be banned by Equity, and indefinitely.

"Your contract with Mrs. Reagan is binding," Equity cabled him. "It would be against law and simple honesty to ignore it now. She has entered into grave financial responsibilities.

"Do you wish to ruin her and stamp yourself as dishonorable? Your suspension from Equity, with its train of publicity and opprorium, will start Saturday, unless you cable us your intention of returning."

I asked Robeson to call on me to tell me his story. An artist of his distinction should not rest under such a slur.

"It would be a great pity if this outstanding member of his race should take such a narrow view of his obligations", says "Equity" the American actors' official magazine. Fancy his colored blood being dragged in!

This racial question comes up every other day. We English people sold Negro slaves to America years ago. It is our fault, not theirs. Every now and then some problem arises.

You could not sit and see "Topsy and Eva" the other night without remembering, when the old plantation songs were sung, how they still stir in us memories of wrongs we have inflicted.

The Problem In London

I saw people looking the other week, when Robeson and his wife were lunching in a fashionable restaurant. An American actress came over to me a few nights afterwards and protested when a famous colored singer was sitting in the grill room.

At a dress parade last week, when rich folk were being shown the latest frocks, two black women walked in, to everyone's dismay.

"Oh, that is Mrs. Blank and Mrs. Dash," said the manageress when a woman protested.

She mentioned the names of two famous variety artists now before the public.

At "Topsy and Eva", I saw, in a box, one of the Four Harmony Kings with his wife and a titled woman.

Who on earth are those niggers?" said somebody.

This is one of the problems that always stares us in the face. Every tyranny gives rise to trouble for centuries after the tyranny is over.

Blamed By His Own Race

"I have had cables from heads of the colored community in America upbraiding me for letting my race down," Robeson told me. "No one seems to understand that I am right.

"Although I am threatened with suspension by Equity, which means I could not act on any American stage, they do not remember that my wife who went to New York on purpose, sat in Equity's office waiting for an arbitration to which Mrs. Reagan did not come. Even now I am prepared to pay whatever damages Equity thinks she has suffered. I will do anything to put the matter right."

How It All Began

Robeson told me how it was last January, when his wife was very ill and his child was in hospital, and he was worried, that he signed a contract with Mrs. Reagan, a white woman, who had taken the first colored revue to Paris, with Josephine Baker.

They talked over a high-class Negro revue, in which he was to do a dramatic sketch, sing some blues, and appear in a sketch written around Negro Spirituals. They talked of Jerome Kern doing music, Robeson and Irving Berlin, and putting on a high-class show. The idea had degenerated since then.

"I could go to America now and make £25,000 in a few months playing in films.

"Even two years ago I could have earned £660 a week in America. I turned down 'Show-Boat' originally, when it was to have been written around me. When I did take the Drury Lane engagement it was because Mrs. Reagan's revue was not ready. Now, I cannot leave it.

"I have refused £600 a week for a vaudeville engagement in London. I have been offered cabaret work at enormous prices. I am not a cabaret artist. I do not belong to it. I feel I have my career, which will help my people. If I am, inside, what I feel I am, and what people say I am—a great artist—I have years in front of me in which to earn all the money I want. I do not want to make a million and quit. What should I do with it?

"Besides, if I fulfilled the Reagan contract I could still earn £600, or even £700, a week, more than I earn in London."

Not Suited for Jazz

"Then I went into 'Porgy' for six weeks," went on Robeson, "playing a heavy role that was too much of a strain on my singing voice. People wanted to hear me sing Spirituals. I began to realize that I could not sing vulgar blues depending on risque catch-lines to get them over, that I would be no good in a revue. I have offered to pay. I have not been allowed to pay. My religious Spirituals would have been unsuited for a jazz show. I should have known..."

From the point of view of art, why should a man like Robeson, whose voice thrilled James Douglas into an ecstasy of praise, and who, at his first one-man concert at Drury Lane, took £450, aud was such a success that, at the second concert, three weeks later, £675 was taken, be wasted on some cheap-jack show, when he is meant for greater things? His reputation is worth more, he feels, than any £30,000 raised for a revue by the use of his name.

The Son of a Slave

This man Robeson has a case. When you think of his career you stand appalled at the small things that you yourself have done, with more chances than those with which he started.

His father was a slave. When freedom dawned he became a preacher, and it was at his father's services that the boy Paul learned

Money That Still Waits

"People won't understand that I do not want money," went on

he Spirituals which fashionable folk now applaud.

He is a lawyer really, not an actor, not a singer.

"I was offered a part in 'Voodoo,'" he said, "and more or less for un I played it, hoping too to make money to study law. Then I ame to England to act with Mrs. Pat Campbell in the part. Then sadora Duncan's brother encouraged me, and then Eugene O'Neill."

Where the Black Man Fails

He gave up his idea of being a lawyer, and was prepared to starve or his new-found art. Then he acted in "The Emperor Jones,' which ame to London, and afterwards in "All God's Chillun's Got Wings," nd then "Black Boy," in which he played the part of a Negro prize-ghter.

"Black Boy" forced on Robeson's mind new ideas of the difficulties f the colored problems. It is the story of a Negro, who, beaten by hite people and white civilization all his life, becomes champion of ie world.

"Yet the Negro could not say the things he really felt," Robeson xplained, "because the white people in the audience would not stand or it. If you write a Negro play that is honest, you find the white udiences of America won't listen, so the play becomes impossible."

His physique fitted Robeson admirably for the pugilistic part. Ie was the only colored member of the All-America football team for wo successive years, the best player of his time.

How He Began to Sing

Then one day in "The Emperor Jones," when he was supposed to vhistle with fright, he started to sing instead, just a few bars of nelody.

"Why don't you sing something?" said a friend once at a party.

"I can't sing," replied Robeson.

"Sing something," the company pressed.

"Much to my surprise," said Robeson, "they all started crying when I sang. They seemed to think I had a voice, I never knew before. I suppose all Negroes can sing. That is how I started. I took my voice on tour, and now I am a singer, and people cry when I sing.

"Two years ago I took a few lessons in technique, just to learn how to save my voice. I was never taught singing, and I was never taught acting. Somehow it seems to come out of me naturally. . . . .

"I shall stay in England if I can, and make a career over here. People over here seem to understand."

Well that is the case—or part of it—of a great colored artist.

Operatic World Awaits Showing Of Unusual Play

Negro In Love With Pretty White Girl, Jazz And Din Feature Opera Which Startled Europe

NEW YORK, Dec. 20.—(By A. N. P.)—Since the World War, European artists and dramatists have been busy exploiting the change of scene incident to that conflict. The Negro has played no inconspicuous part in the new makeup of Europe's social map and, as a consequence, it has been impossible to overlook him and the situations brought about by his presence. Continental authors have found him not only a fruitful source of controversy, but of interest.

Everything that is significant either in the Old World or the New World, is supposed to eventually reach this cosmopolitan city in some form or other. Thus a new drama hero, hitherto shown in London, who sought to expose how different racial and economic forces exercise themselves in the romantic relations of American Negro soldiers and French girls. The play, "Goin' Home," received favorable but restrained comment from the critics, but did not last long. The picture of the Negro hero, though patently touched in spots, was not of the conventional pattern.

Nevertheless, as a result of the more or less success of certain so-called Negro musical comedies, and of such drama, on Broadway, New York producers are willing to take a gamble on the public's assumed favorable disposition for the Negro, or the Negro theme, behind the footlights.

The startling announcement has therefore been made that in January, the Metropolitan Opera Company will present an opera which calls for a jazz band on the stage, and whose hero is a Negro in love with a white girl. The Associated Press dispatch concerning this sensational departure, reads:

"The opera is 'Jonny Spielt Auf,' by Ernst Krenek, a young Austro-Czechish composer. During 1927 it traveled over central Europe, following its world premier in the staid old Neues Theater in Leipsic.

"The hero is Jonny, a young American Negro, who has conquered Europe with his jazz band. He has not been long in Europe before he discovers that white people over there have different ideas about interracial love and courtship than they have in America.

Courts Opera Singer

"He courts a beautiful white opera singer, having as his rivals a composer and a celebrated violin virtuoso, both wihte.

SSMu etaoin shrdu cmfwyp shrdl

"In the last act, which takes place in a large continental railroad station. Jonny falls under an express train and is killed. Abroad the train, it develops, are the opera singer and the composer, eloping to America. Suddenly the illuminated station clock becomes transformed into an immense globe, on which Jonny is perched—inviting all the world to join in an outpouring of jazz, while he leads the band."

Musically, "Jonny Spielt Auf" is said to be as sensational as is its plot.

Motor Car and Blues

"In it there are all sorts of sounds which have heretofore been regarded with horror by devotees of the opera. The roar and clatter of a railway station, for instance, a locomotive, the din and bustle of a hotel lobby, a motor car—and always, banging and crashing through the entire score, jazz, jazz, jazz. Drums, trumpets — saxophones, playing "blues!"

"One of the most startling innovations, critics say, is a radio loud speaker, right there on the stage in plain view, broadcasting Jonny's jazz band.

"'Fresh' (in the slangy sense), 'insolent,' and 'abominable' are some of the expressions that critics who have seen—and heard—'Jonny Spielt Auf' in Europe use in describing it. The opera hod its world premiere in Leipsic in February, 1927. Thereafter it was produced in Berlin.

Robeson Suspended By Actors Association

NEW YORK, N. Y., Sept. 13.—For the first time in his notable career, Paul Robeson, now appearing in the London version of the famous Ziegfeld musical production, "Show Boat" finds himself "in bad" with the theatrical powers that be. But his troubles, strange as it may seem, are not in London, they are in New York, despite the fact that Paul is in London.

Beginning September 1, Paul finds himself suspended from the Actors' Equity Association for one month.

This action, decided at the Council meeting last week, was brought about on a complaint by Mrs. Caroline Dudley Reagan of 61 West 12th street, who under the professional name of Caroline Dudley, charges that last January Robeson signed a contract with her to appear in a revue to be produced by her.

According to an Equity official his contract with her was a run of the play variety but it is said to run from October 1 this year until July 29 next year.

Mrs. Dudley Reagan asserts she has obligated herself as regards a cast, composers, actors and lyricists and writers for this show and that when time came to start rehearsals there was no sign of Robeson.

Robeson's wife returned from abroad recently with the intention, it is understood of straightening matters out, but apparently unsuccessfully, as Mrs. Dudley lodged her complaint.

In the meantime the Equity suspension is a temporary affair until a... answer can be received to their communication sent to Robeson, who is playing the leading role in the London production of "Show Boat."

An Equity official said recently that should a satisfactory answer not be forthcoming from Robeson, then the suspension would become indefinite.

This suspension does not effect Robeson's continuing to play in London for as long as he and Florenz Ziegfeld like and can only become actively effective on his return to these shores.

Neither Equity nor the usual dramatic schedules could furnish any clues as to what Mrs. Reagan's revue is to be called, who are in the cast or who are the authors, composers and writers concerned. As a producer on Broadway it would appear Mrs. Reagan is totally unknown.

When it is remembered that colored actors members of white companies only, are allowed to join the association which protects the interests of the players, the seriousness of the charges against Robeson are clarified.

PAUL ROBESON

Theatrical - 1928

Individual Troupes, etc.,

RACE QUESTION ON PARIS STAGE; SENEGALESE NEGRO TRIUMPHS IN STELLAR PART

By J. A. ROGERS

PARIS—The latest play to create a sensation in this city deals with the race question, or to be exact, the race question though brought in indirectly, is none the less effectively dealt with. The moral is: Let the Negro be on his guard always for no matter how sincere he may be the white man may be using him as a tool.

Gutlibi, the play in question, is said to have been inspired in much of its detail by the life of Siki, the conqueror of Georges Carpentier. Like Siki, the principal character of the play, Gutlibi, comes from Senegal.

Gutlibi, in the prologue, is shown in a village in his native Senegal, working the beautiful trinkets of gold as his ancestors for many generations have done. He is a master at his art and sings joyfully as he works. But the war comes and like others of his tribesmen he is called to France, where he distinguishes himself on the battlefield. He is possessed of extraordinary strength, is primitive in his ways, and finds the white man's way not altogether to his liking.

But the whites find that they can use that strength of his to make money for themselves, particularly as accompanying it is some skill as a boxer. Three Americans finance a boxing deal for him, or rather themselves and a shrewd French manager takes him in hand. Gutlibi wins match after match, until he has a considerable sum of money at his disposal. But he is far from being content. He find that he is forever being used as a tool, while he wishes to be accepted for himself as he would be in his native Senegal.

The white women, for instance, as he complains seek him out for his primitive vigor and the fact that he can sign a fat check but they do not love him for himself as the women of his native land would do. His backers, too are always exploiting him to enrich themselves, imposing many restrictions on him in order that he may be fit.

The scene now is in a hotel in Belgrade, where Gutlibi, elegantly dressed is awaiting a match that his backers hope will make him world champion. But he is little interested for now he is really in love with one of the waitresses, a Russian refugee, beautiful and blonde, Anna Brassova, who later turns out to be a princess from the court of the dead Czar. Gutlibi addresses her passionate words of love, telling her that he wishes to be loved for himself, that he was tired of being a tool for others, that during the war he was brought from his native land to kill and kill. "Heaps of slain." But he does not know what the war was all about. He tells her of how and why the other white women have sought him out, and promises to be ever so devoted to her. It is evident that he has won her. He gives her a beautiful jewel case made entirely by his own hand, and is happy at last that he has found true love. She becomes his mistress.

But it is common talk at the hotel that Anna has another lover, one Llievitch, who turns out to be an agent of the Soviets. Gutlibi, however, is ignorant of this. Anna and Llievitch meet often, and the latter pleads his love passionately.

Anna, as was said, was a princess at the Czar's court. She believes in monarchy, and was very much affected by the massacre of the Czar and his family. There is one gleam of hope, however, and that is that the son of the Czar, heir to the throne, is still alive and hidden in a monastery in Siberia. She has long made up her mind to be revenged on the slayers of the Czar, and suspects among others, Llievitch.

Then one day the crushing news comes that the son of the Czar perished in the general massacre of the royal family. This decides her. With the aid of an artist she transforms her room into an exact similitude of the humble Ipatieff home in which the massacre had taken place.

Written on the wall is the date of the massacre with spots of blood around it. Into this chamber Llievitch is invited and he is so overcome with remorse that he betrays his guilt. Anna decides on his death, and her instrument as Gutlibi.

Gutlibi meanwhile is so enamored of Anna that he tells her he is willing to do anything, to go with her to Russia if necessary. To get rid of his manager he offers him any sum he wishes, and writes him a check for 300,000 francs. Anna gives every indication of loving him sincerely.

She, as was said, had decided on the murder of Llievitch, and arranges a dinner for three, Gutlibi, Llievitch, and herself. Then after dismissing the servants, she arises, gives one arm to Gutlibi; the other to Llievitch, and declares that she is very fortunate because she has two lovers, both of whom are present. A violent quarrel arises between the two, and Gutlibi strangles his rival.

The triumphant princess, hysterical with joy betrays the fact that she had planned to use Gutlibi for the purpose. Gutlibi, in killing him, had thought, however he had done so on his, Gutlibi's, account only to find that once again he has been a tool. There is a rap on the door. Anna turns to fly but returns to caress Gutlibi, saying that she feels sure he will protect her as he has always done.

This is the bald outline of the play which is filled throughout with intrigue, political passions, and mysticisms. In only one instance is matter of color brought in and that is when Gutlibi, in first pleading his love, asks her if it is his color that makes her hesitate in accepting his love, and pleading that although he is black he is as capable of love as a white man. The princess, however, placing her hand tenderly on his kinky head assures him that color does not enter into the question as far as she is concerned.

The part of Gutlibi, the star, is played not by a white man posing as a Negro, but by a native Senegalese, the noted Habib Benglia, one of the leading actors on the European stage, and perhaps the greatest living Negro actor this be it said, not because the American Negro actor is incapable of the same but because he has not the largeness of opportunity of the French Negro. Bengalia has played in Faust and other noted places, non-Negro, receiving warm praise from the public. In Gutlibi Bengalia, is superb throughout with his almost perfect enunciation, well-carrying voice, fine athletic physique, and spirit of impulsive kindliness and sympathy. The applause he receives is warm, and he had to respond to several curtain calls. The part of the princess was also very well done by Mlle. Marguerite Valmond, one of the most accomplished and most beautiful actresses on the French stage.

Speaking of the play the New York Herald (Paris edition) said:

"Gutlibi, the Senegalese gold-worker who fought for France and later became a serious contender for the world's championship, is the principal character and really the only one that excites the sympathy of the auditors. This part is played in masterful fashion by Habib Bengalia, the noted actor who also staged this production. Whether he is a Senegalese Negro, a boxing champion, who exasperates and terrifies his manager, the sincere and respectful lover pleading for the affection of the Russian princess, or the triumphant male who strangles his adversary, Bengalia plays his role with consummate art. He scores the triumph of the evening.

"As for the plot, it sets out to show that Gutlibi has never been able to assert himself—son moi—but is always the instrument for others, whether as soldier in the trenches, or boxer, or pleading, or heart-broken lover. He thought the Russian princess loved him and all the while she was using him as an instrument to avenge the dead czarevitch. The pathos, the bitterness of all this are portrayed with dramatic realism by Habib Bengalia.

"Marguerite almond gives a vivid representation of Anna, the Russian mystic who has sworn to bring the assassin of the czarevitch to justice. She shares honors with Bengalia."

It might be well to say that Bengalia is the only Negro in the cast. The play is written by M. Porzano,

who it is said is, Italian.

Bengalia, as is said, is a well-known figure on the Parisian stage. In the performance prior to this but one he acted in a play at the Varieties on the Grand Boulevard, that if played in America, would have had friends and foes of the Negro, alike, buzzing like a nest of angry hornets. It dealt with a domestic drama in which a neglected wife deciding to get even with her unfaithful husband calls a male acquaintance to spend an evening of love with him. But in his place another man answers and enamored with his voice she makes a date with him. The unknown turns out to be a Negro. Nothing undaunted, however, she takes up with him and in time presents her husband with a mulatto baby.

In 1925 at about the time when the agitation against "All God's Chillun" was at its height, because a Negro and a white woman were to play as equals, Bengalia was starring at the Folies-Bergare, as this writter, wrote in the American journals. In his act he wore a loin cloth, and the women, all of whom were white, wore still less, and were sitting on his knees or stretching their nude bodies over his in the dance. All be it said to the tranquillity not only of the French people but to the other Europeans who throng the Folies.

Bengalia also recently starred in a motion picture play: "Yasmina" where he scored a triumph. He and the Japanese, Sessue Hayakawa, are perhaps the only two screen actors possessed of the uncanny power of conveying wholm reams of thought by a single look or a single movement of the body.

Gutlibi is being played at the Madeleine, one of the theatres de luxe of this city.

Clarinetist Is Sensation In Blackbirds

9/15/28

NEW YORK, N. Y., Sept. 13.—Sandwiched in between the tap dancing of Bill Robinson, the hoydenish prancing of Adelaide Hall and the droll comicalities of Tim Moore, all in Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds of 1928," at the Liberty Theater, is Wilton Crawley, clarinetist extraordinary. Under ordinary circumstances there is nothing about a clarinet or a clarinet player to draw comment, but Wilton Crawley is probably the most unique clarinetist on the American stage and as such deserves special mention.

Crawley began playing the clarinet when he was hardly in his teens. There was something about the instrument which fascinated the primitive in him and very soon it was bruited about the Southern town of Asheville, where he was born, that he was the ablest clarinetist in the town if indeed not in the entire state. Mayors and governors were happy to open their executive mansions to him even though he was an Ethiopian and before long discerning music critics, too, began to regard him as the ablest instrumentalist in his line.

But Crawley, much to his chagrin, discovered that the immutable law of economics forced him into the mart of professionalism, where concert lovers and even vaudeville patrons showed no particular flair for a clarinetist, even though he clarineted better than anybody had done before. Crawley therefore set about putting a bit of showmanship in his act. The jazz era was just dawning at the time and he then and there determined to jazz his clarinet, which, when accompanied by a series of twisting body movements, gave the impression, from an orchestra seat, of a novelty offering hitherto never seen across the footlights. And it was so. The popularity of Wilton Crawley grew by leaps and bounds and soon he became a fixture on the variety stages of the country.

Broadway loomed too far distant for the ambitious Crawley until Lew Leslie hove into the offing. Leslie at this time was gathering material and talent for his "Blackbirds" and he invited Crawley to join his troupe. The result has been more than satisfactory to both Lew Leslie, Wilton Crawley and the playgoers who for four months have been going to see "Blackbirds." All of which goes to prove what a little showmanship can do in an economic crisis.

SPOKESMAN-REVIEW
SPOKANE, WASH.

NOV 12 1928

ANY ONE CAN WIN, NEGRO PROVES

"Appearances," Stage Success, Written by Former Bellboy, Is at American Tonight.

AUTHOR VISITS HERE

Garland Anderson's Aim Was to Do Something to Aid Mankind.

"Appearances," which will be shown at the American theater this evening only, is the work of a negro bellboy, Garland Anderson, who, with but four years of schooling and no knowledge of stage technique, wrote the play in three weeks while sitting at the switchboard of a hotel in San Francisco. The play ran six weeks in and about New York, three months in San Francisco and is now headed east. In Chicago a second company is to be formed and in New York a third company will take the play, which has been acclaimed by the best critics to London.

Mr. Anderson, who is traveling with the company, but takes no part in the play, is a quiet spoken, fine-looking negro with a serene faith that any one can do anything, providing his purpose is right that he sets out to do.

"I do not wish to be acclaimed as a great playwright," he said. "All my life I have been a servant and that's all I wish to be now.

Knows Some One Has Been Helped.

"I have received hundreds of letters from people who have seen my play and been helped by it, and every night after the performance I know that some one has been helped in his progress in life. I received a letter from one man in San Francisco who was on the verge of suicide. A friend induced him to see the play, and, inspired by the message of the black bellboy in the play, which character is patterned after my life, regained his courage and is now in a high position.

"I don't preach in the play. I don't have to. I know that every one who sees the play will agree it's a good play. That's proof enough that any one can do what he wants to do if he tries hard enough, as they'll agree that an unschooled black bellboy wrote a play because he wanted to."

Al Jolson Aided Him.

Mr. Anderson, who is 42 years old, wrote the play four years ago and showed the manuscript to a cousin of Al Jolson's in San Francisco. He in turn wired Al Jolson, and Mr. Jolson paid Mr. Anderson's expenses to New York city, where he was entertained by the banker, Otto Kahn, at his home; was the honored guest of the Drama league at the Biltmore hotel, and the honored guest of the Comedy Drama club and spoke following Channing Pollock to a crowd of 3000 people. David Belasco and Al Jolson each have contributed $1000 toward the restaging of the play in New York city when Mr. Anderson arrives there on this trip.

Mr. Anderson spoke at the Church of the Truth last night on "Success With God as Your Partner," and will speak at the church at 2:30 o'clock this afternoon.

SISSLE FLIES TO PARIS FOR CONCERT—Photograph shows Noble Sissle (extreme left) at Le Bourget flying field in Paris just after he had flown there from London for concert in honor of General Gouraud. Others in the group are H. E. Tillotson, Miss Helen Sissle, Mrs. Sissle and the pilot.

Theatrical - 1928

Individual Troupes, etc.

New York Hears First Negro Opera Company Sing "First Opera by Colored Composer"

By Alfred Frankenstein.

NEW YORK, Sept. 15.—[Special Correspondence.] — This town, the paradise of small opera companies, now boasts a new operatic venture. It is called the Negro Opera company, Inc. and its first production is a three act affair called "Voodoo," by a Negro composer, H. Lawrence Freeman.

Both the company and the opera, the press department assures us, are the first to be conected by the Negro race. The company reveals the defects of amateurishness that were foregone conclusions and are scarcely worthy of mention. The opera, too, has its flaws, but they are of a type that was not to be anticipated and they set one's mind to speculating on the whole matter of the Negro's contribution to American art.

* *

Counteracting the Charm.

The libretto of "Voodoo," which, like the music, is Freeman's work, is concerned with the attempt of a voodoo priestess to kill her rival in love at a voodoo ceremony and with the success of the priestess' mother in making more powerful magic to counteract the voodoo charm. All the action of the story takes place at the tail end of the third act. The bulk of the opera is taken up with incidentals. The book has no form, but we have heard too many operas with badly constructed books to carp at this one on that score alone.

Significant of the trend of the work is the fact that the old characters and the comic figures use the Negro dialect, while the hero, heroine, and villainess use such English as can be found in the English columns of the librettos sold in the lobby at the Auditorium.

I recall such lines: "Ah, could I to thy for mthe life but restore," and "List! The nightingale is trilling." The point is that Freeman is so anxious to produce in the great line of European development that he falls into the stupidest conventions of the European stage, even to the extent of setting a nightingale trilling in Louisiana, where nightingales are as scarce as the duck-billed platypus.

Complexes Clash.

One can see in American Negro art the stress of opposing tendencies. On the one hand is the feeling of inferiority that comes to all racial minorities in this country and causes to be deified such representatives of minority groups as acquire the manners of the majority. [Observe, for example, the popularity of Roland Hayes]. The influence of American education and environment produces similar results, though the inferiority motivation may not be so strong.

On the other hand is the feeling of pride in the racial tradition. And works of art in the Negro style find a ready market in the white majority. But the very fact of this demand places the Negro artist in somewhat the position of the humorist who must always be funny, even when he has much to say in the serious vein. Sometimes the colored brother grows weary of being himself.

* *

Borrowing from the Masters.

All these stresses can be seen and heard in "Voodoo." The composer has learned his lesson from the books, and the books he has chiefly used bear the signatures of McDowell, Wagner, and Harry Thacker Burleigh. One can hear in the music incantations from the pine woods of Peterboro and the orchestra pit of Bayreuth. One can hear also the solemn command, "Let my people go!" which hides in its tones the wishes of a dark skinned Israel. But the fierceness of the commanding desire is vitiated and the speed of the movement it would set loose is weak, chiefly because the composer is too familiar with those mummified conventions of the librettists and their translators.

One more book Mr. Freeman should study. It should be a history of modern music. There he would learn that the Russians and the Spanish and the Hungarians and the English and others have lifted themselvese into high position in musical art by deep study and unremitting exploitation of their racial resources, and by no other means.

ROGERS GIVES IMPRESSIONS OF MUCH DISCUSSED "SHOW BOAT"

By J. A. Rogers

LONDON.—"Show Boat" has been reviewed so often and so much said about it that it would seem a waste of time for me to write another review of it. I will therefore give only my personal impressions of it.

While in Paris I had heard much about it from colored tourists and residents who had seen it and in every case comment was unfavorable. One well known doctor who was here this summer was strong in his condemnation of it and told me that he thought it was a deliberate attempt on the part of the white American to carry his anti-Negro propaganda into Europe. Another lady, who heard Layton and Johnson sing in Paris, told me that she was enjoying their singing immensely until they got to one of the songs from Show Boat with its "nigger, nigger," and then she got up and walked out. The word "nigger" is perhaps the most frequent one in the play.

I also heard many harsh things said against Robeson for lending his talent and popularity toward making it a success. "If any one were to call him a 'nigger,'" said one person to me, "he'd be the first to get offended, and there he is singing 'nigger, nigger,' before all those white people." With me, at the play, too, was Mrs. Maude Walker, teacher of Dayton, Ohio, and she said after the tour she had just made over Europe, and the perfect absence of color prejudice, everywhere, that is would be impossible for her to say how thoroughly disgusted she was with the play.

All in all fully some thirty Negroes of intelligence or self-respect had expressed to me their disapprobation of the play. Therefore, it was with some curiosity that I found myself at the famous old Drury Lane Theatre to see it for myself.

And just here let me inject a fact about myself. I have read so many bad books about Negroes—hundreds and hundreds of them—I have heard so many bad things said, I have been jim-crowed, and insulted and knocked about in America so much because of my complexion, that my indignation very vivid and electrical in the beginning, has, I fear become somewhat frayed or flabby in these latter days from excessive use. I know, moreover, that at least seventy-five per cent of white Americans would rather hear bad than good said about Negroes, further, that at least ninety-five per cent of all white people are more interested in a primitive Negro than in a refined, educated one, just as a primitive Englishman, or German, or Italian, or white Southerner is more interesting to me, at least at first sight, than one in a boiled shirt or one mincing along on stilts.

I know, also, that the great majority of white people expect spirituals or coon songs from Negroes and that they would much rather hear them than a selection from Verdi, or a song from Ben Johnson. I know further that plays and books are written for money and that only idealistic idiots like myself and a few others, still insist that they should be written first of all for spiritual advancement. Putting two and two together, I realize that since this is so and that white producers are out to make money and must give the people what they want, namely, just what the more self-respecting Negroes are objecting to in Show Boat, that the only thing left for me, so far as plays and books on the order of Show Boat are concerned, is to become a philosopher. One thing is sure: White producers when they stage these plays, do not take Negroes into account, except in so far as they can use them to give to the public what the public wants. But so far as the Negro as a box office factor is concerned he simply doesn't enter into the calculations of producer.

Having said all this I will proceed.

Snappy and Sparkling

To me Show Boat was at the same time a pleasure and a dissapointment. A pleasure in that I had been led to believe from reviews or bits from reviews that apart from the colored people in it, the play was worth almost nothing. The fact is that Show Boat is one of the most snappy and sparkling plays I have ever seen, and rarely have I laughed so much at a play. The white actors were several of them unusually good. Cedric Hardwicke as Captain Andy of the Show Boat, kept the audience in a continuous roar of laughter whenever he appeared; Viola Compton, as his wife, acted the part of the respectable and prudish Southern matron to perfection, while the dancing and acting of Edith Day, the leading lady, was excellent throuhgout, as was the part played by Leslie Sarony, another very funny man. The white chorus girls, on the whole, were so poor, however, that they are hardly worth a mention.

Negroes Have Minor Parts

On the other hand I was disappointed as I said. From what I had heard I expected to see the Negroes occupying a part of some prominence but they were buried away so securely as they would have been were they sitting in some white theatre in Georgia or Virginia, or at a reception given by the governor of Alabama to his constituency. Show Boat in short is a white man's play, and the colored brother, as usual, occupied the usual place. Not a bit different from in America.

Even Robeson, who was superb, as always, and at least as great an attraction as any other person in the cast, occupied a position well in the rear, his role being that of the lazy, good-natured, lolling darky, a type that exists more in white man's fancy than in reality. His singing of "Old Man River," is unforgettable, and was very warmly applauded.

Alberta Hunter, who possesses undeniable talent, was as good in her part as the white leading lady was in hers, yet Miss Hunter was only a maid and played also a very trivial part. As to the colored chorus girls, they were all that the white chorus were not. I cannot recall having seen anywhere else such a nifty, well matched chorus. All were about the same weight and complexion, even the same size of legs, and resembled so many fairies. They danced well, and did credit to the training of John Payne, well known singer, who trained the colored cast. Several persons have said to me: "With such a fine cast of colored people, why doesn't Robeson withdraw and have his own show

instead of being a pawn for the white man?"

As to why Robeson doesn't withdraw that's too big a question for me, and I believe it would be for Robeson, too, but why so many of our leading Negroes in increasing numbers should be pawns for the white man, that is a question I, myself, would like to ask. For there is no doubt, at least in my mind, that plays like Show Boat, Emperor Jones, Lulu Belle, Porgy, Roseanne and many others, as well as books like Home to Harlem, Tropic Death, Fine Clothes to the Jew, and others are white man's propaganda, and that he finances them because it helps to make more secure his economic superiority over the Negroes, as a mass. And that is undeniable. The Negroes who take part in these plays or write these books are mere cat's paws, and get a very paltry sum in comparison with what accrues to the white man.

'VOODOO,' RACE OPERA OPENS UP NEW FIELD

Lawrence Freeman's Play Takes Pioneer Step In New Race Culture

SINGING EXCELLENT

Large Chorus And Orchestra Of Twenty-One Pieces

NEW YORK—When "Voodoo," the first race opera to be offered in this country, written by H. Lawrence Freeman, and presented by his son Valdo, closed their engagement at the 52nd Street Theatre, here, it marked a pioneer step in a new line of race culture.

Reviewed in the "Billboard" the author's attempts are spoken of in a very complimentary manner. Of the opera, this publication says:

"Voodoo is the first American opera composed, produced and sung by Negroes. Despite heartbreaking handicaps due to obvious production limitations, apparently caused by lack of funds, Voodoo is a most encouraging sign that the Negro is capable of entering the operatic field and of contributing valuable material and talent to it. This work, however, serves more as a shadow cast before future developments rather than the realization of a perfect production, for in its present state it cannot rank with the best in opera.

Last Act Best

Freeman, the composer, is not completely original in his composition. He has leaned on several sharply defined phases in national music. Negro folk songs serve as the basis for much of his score, as do the spirituals, and Tin Pan Alley also shows a slight imprint. The result is that the production gives the impression of lacking a genuine authenticity and that it depends too much on outside influences to be completely Negro. The last act is unquestionably the finest and here and there are touches of inspired creative powers.

Plot Complicated

The theme is appropriate for this first Negro opera. It is based on the mystical and superstitious "Voodoo," a sort of curse. Plot is complicated, but creditable, and lyrics are generally good, but at times become a trifle lavish.

Singing Excellent

There are some excellent voices. Outstanding among these is that of Doris Trotman, a rich, pure soprano of excellence, whose only weakness rests in her high notes. Thomas R. Hall is a fine baritone, and William H. Holland registers as a basso. Others who are satisfactory are Thomas R. Hall, Ray Yates, Valdo Freeman, the producer; Marie Woodby, Joseph Northern and Rosetta Jones. There is a large chorus, and the orchestra of 21 pieces, with the composer as conductor, is good. The alternating cast includes Rosetta Jones, Cordelia Paterson, Luther Lamont, Blanche Smith, John H. Eckles, Leo C. Evans and Harold Bryant. Among those connected with the executive staff are Robert Elchenberg, Leon Williams, Esther Thompson, Octavia Smith, Grace Abrams and Walter Mattis."

'VOO DOO' OPENS IN N. Y.

First Negro Grand Opera Given Test at Palm Garden Theatre

LACKS BACKING

Composer Launches Project Alone When Producers Fail to Show Interest

NEW YORK—"Voodoo," the first Negro grand opera to be presented here, had its premier at the Palm Garden, 806 West Fifty-second street Monday night.

The presentation is sponsored by Valdo Lawrence Freeman, son of H. Lawrence Freeman, the composer, and is scheduled to run at the Palm Garden only one week. New York critics are not enthused over the opera although it is said to have many good features in the musical scores. The settings are not pretensious enough to do credit to an offering that essays to command a place in this field of musical endeavor.

Critics on the Variety Magazine, one of the leading theatrical journals of New York, go so far as to call the offering a curious theatrical abortion, but goes n to say:

cal abortion, but goes on to say:

abortive monstrosity of grand opera jazzaque, is none the less not without its interesting aspects. Those hardy students of the contemporary theatre in all its manifestations may find something of interest for them in this presentation."

Is Benefit

The presentation, which is admittedly a benefit for the composer to aid him in his work includes the following cast: William H. Holland, basso; Thomas T. Hall and Valdo Freeman, baritones; Carlotta Freeman, Doris Trotman and Rosetta Jones, sopranos; Ray Yates and Joseph Northern, tenors; and Marie Woodby, contralto, with an alternate cast comprising Cordelia Paterson, Rosetta Jones, Luther Lamont, Blanche Smith, John H. Eckles, Leo C. Evans, and Harold Bryant.

The offering suffers from a lack of financial backing as the composer after two years of trying to interest parties in the undertaking presented the opera himself.

Freeman is the only Negro listed in "The American Opera and It's Composers."

Our Most Successful Producer

Amsterdam News N.Y. 10-17-28

The Above Photo Shows Henry Drake, Outstanding Producer of the Revue Form of Shows Playing to Colored Audiences —and Sometimes White. Unlike the Majority of the Men in His Line, Drake Has Something to Show for His Efforts in the Game. Recently He Took a Year's Lease on the Old Apolo Teatro on 125th Street and Opened With His Show Last Week.

Theatrical - 1928.

Individual Troupes, et.

RACE IS WARNED BY LATEST PARIS SENSATION PLAY

Senegalese Actor Thrill French In Title Role As Tool Of White Managers

M. BENGLIA IS ONLY NON-WHITE IN DRAMA

Love For Russian Princess Drives Gutlibi To Strangle White Rival In Battle

PARIS. — The latest drama to create a sensation here deals with the race question and leaves the play-goer with this moral when the final curtain is rung down. Let the Negro be on his guard always, for no matter how sincere he may be, the white man is using him as a tool.

"Gutlibi", the play here at the de luxe Madeline Theatre, is said to have been inspired in much of its detail by the life of Siki, the Senegalese conqueror of Georges Carpentier. Like Siki, the principal character, of "Gutlibi" comes from Senegal.

The title and star role is carried by the noted Senegalese actor, M. Habib Bengalia, one of the leading actors on the European stage and perhaps the greatest of African race or descent. Bengalia has played in "Faust" and other noted pieces, and only recently starred in a motion picture "Yasmina". He is the only non-white actor in the play.

In "Gutlibi", Bengalia is superb throughout with his almost perfect enunciation, well-carrying voice, fine athletic physique, and spirit of impulsive kindliness and sympathy. The applause he receives is warm, and he had to respond to several curtain calls. The part of the princess was also very well-done by Mlle. Marguerite Valmond, one of the most accomplished and most beautiful actresses on the French stage.

Gold Worker

Gutlibi, in the prologue, is shown in his native village in Senegal, working on beautiful trinkets of gold. He is a master at the art and sings joyfully at his work. The war comes and he like his tribesmen, is called to France where he distinguishes himself on the battlefield. Possessed of extraordinary strength, in his primitive ways, he finds the white man's ways not altogether to his liking.

White Man's Tool

But the whites find that they can use that strength of his to make money for themselves, particularly as accompanying it is some skill as a boxer. Three Americans finance a boxing deal for him, or rather for themselves and a shrewd French manager takes him in hand. Gutlibi wins match after match, until he has a considerable sum of money at his disposal. But he is far from being content. He finds that he is forever being used as a tool, while he wishes to be accepted for himself as he would be in his native Senegal.

Women Seek Him

The white women, for instance, as he complains seek him out for his primitive vigor and the fact that he can sign a fat check but they do not love him for himself as the women of his native land would do. His backers, too, are always exploiting him to enrich themselves, imposing many restrictions on him in order that he may be fit.

Hopes To Be Champion

The scene now is in a hotel in Belgrade, where Gutlibi, elegantly dressed, is awaiting a match that his backers hope will make him world champion. But he is little interested for now he is really in love with one of the waitresses, a Russian refugee, beautiful and blonde, Anna Brassova, who later turns out to be a princess from the court of the dead Czar.

Gutlibi addresses her in passionate words of love, telling her that he wishes to be loved for himself, that he was tired of being a tool for others that during the war he was brought from his native land to kill and kill. "Heaps of slain."

Ignorant

But he does not know what the war was all about. He tells her of how and why other white women have sought him out, and promises to be ever so devoted to her. It is evident that he has won her. He gives her a beautiful jewel case made entirely by his own hand, and is happy at last that he has found true love. She becomes his mistress.

Anna has another lover, one Llievitch, who turns out be an agent of the Soviets.

She belives in monarchy, and was affected by the massacre of the Czar and his family. There is one gleam of hope, however, and that is that the son of the Czar, heir to the throne, is still alive and hidden in a monastery in Siberia. She has long made up her mind to be revenged on the slayers of the Czar, and suspects among others, Llievitch.

Then one day the crushing news comes that the son of the Czar perished in the general massacre of the royal family. This decides her. With the aid of an artist she transforms her room into an exact similtude of the humble Ipatieff home in which the massacre had taken place.

Strangles Rival

Llievitch is so overcome with remorse that he betrays his guilt. Anna decides on his death, and her instrument as Gutlibi.

She arranges a dinner for three, Gutlibi, Llievitch and herself. A violet quarrel arises between the two, and Gutlibi strangles his rival.

The triumphant princess, hysterical with joy over the corpse, betrays the fact that she had planned to use Gutlibi for the purpose. Gutlibi, in killing him, had thought, however, he had done so on his account only to find that once again he has been a tool. There is a rap on the door. Anna turns to fly but returns to caress Gutlibi, saying that she fels sure he will protect her as he has always done.

NEW YORK WORLD

JUN 3 1928

Broadway Footnotes

Negro Talent to Evolve an Annual Revue; Murmurs of a Summer Season

By Howard Barnes

IT WAS no empty promise when Lew Leslie announced recently that his current Negro revue, "Blackbirds of 1928," would become an annually recurring institution on Broadway, patterned very much on the manner of George White's "Scandals" and Ziegfeld's "Follies."

The producer is thoroughly imbued with the conception of an annual edition for his Negro troupe. Already his plans are rapidly formulating and they imply interesting and in some instances radical effects on both the Broadway season and the artistic colony of Harlem.

* * *

Mr. Leslie has bided his time, content to see scores of Negro players perfecting their talents in the past few years. "They are now ready," he says, "to compete with regular Broadway revue artists." Not only will Negro players be involved in the producer's undertakings, however, for his dream is to evolve a Broadway revue, Negro in all its elements.

As the first step in this direction, he has engaged Bill Vodery, Harlem's master of orchestration, to compose the music for "Blackbirds of 1929." Vodery's original compositions have been little heard outside of Harlem cabarets. Finding too meagre a market for his talents in this restricted field, the composer has turned to orchestration, a large portion of his work having been done for Bert Lytell.

* * *

With strictly Negro music in prospect for next season's "Blackbirds," Mr. Leslie is sending out scores of letters to Harlem lyricists, asking them for ideas on both lyrics and book for the revue. He is confident that there is a wealth of Negro talent for such a job, though it has lain fallow these many years. Without the assurance of a Negro revue coming annually to Broadway, Harlem's artists have been forced to turn to other fields of activity, he explains. Now, he hopes, they will concentrate in providing material for his shows.

Fresh from triumphs in Europe, Josephine Baker will be given a lead in the coming season's edition, Mr. Leslie further confides. His evaluation of this artist's talents is interesting. He does not share, by any means, in the unrestrained ovation which Miss Baker was accorded in Paris, for instance. Although he could have secured her services for this year's "Blackbirds," he desired to wait till she became more experienced on the boards. "A revue artist's worth cannot be judged on the basis of her costume or lack of it," he tersely puts it

NEW YORK TELEGRAPH

JUL 21 1928

The Negro Revue

When Lew Leslie first brought his assemblage of Negro dancers, singers and comics to the Broadway scene in a floor show at the Plantation, a supper club, he reawakened the Ethiopians to the opportunities for histrionic success along the Great White Way which, for one reason or another, they had left entirely to the whites.

With perhaps one or two exceptions, no Negro revue came to Broadway from 1908, when George Walker, of Williams & Walker, retired from the stage, until Lew Leslie started a veritable avalanche of Negroid entertainment through his colored cabaret experiment in 1921. Then the productions came with regularity. Broadway was treated, among others, to "Shuffle Along," "Rang Tang," "Runnin' Wild," "From Dixie to Broadway," "Keep Shufflin'," and now Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds of 1928."

The colored revue of the Williams & Walker era and the Negro entertainment of the present-day are markedly different. The former was typically Negroid in manner of scenic investiture, while the latter follows somewhat the grand style of Florenz Ziegfeld and George White.

* * *

Early Negro Shows

Because of slavery, Negro entertainment did not make much headway professionally until after the Civil War. There were here and there nomadic minstrel and jubilee entertainers who somehow managed to eke out a precarious living in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, but very little is known of these. In all probability the first group of Ethiopian entertainers to gain a measure of popularity were those who comprised the Lucca family.

They began their travels in a wagon some time around 1850 and offered a program of native concerts in halls, churches and under tents in open lots. The family disbanded in 1879. There is a record of production known as Lew Johnson's Georgia Minstrels which played the various plantations in the South in 1852, but very little is known of the organization.

Charles Callendar, a white showman, is credited with being the first to organize a Negro minstrel troupe in America. This was in 1868. From this point onward, Negro entertainment took on a decided spurt. Individuals and companies sprang up in various sections of the country. Slavery had been abolished and the Negro was beginning to find himself. Most of the entertainers found favor in the variety halls, then the backbone of vaudeville in the country. Among these were Lyles & Lyles, Charles Caruso, a monologist; an artist known as "Blind" Tom, who thrilled the country with his piano playing; Mlle. Selika, and Sisseretta Jones, who was called the "Black Patti." All of these rose to popularity between 1870 and 1890.

Josephine Baker's New Role as Movie Star Is Successful

Paris, France.—Josephine Baker, the celebrated "Black Venus," has entered the movies and is meeting with splendid success. A film in which she is starred has been showing at the Aubert Palace on the Grand Blvd. for the last month, and still the place is crowded day and night.

The film is entitled "The Siren of the Tropics" and is written by Maurice Dekobra, France's most popular writer. So far as the "color" part of the play is concerned it is rather conventional, being the old story of the native girl who falls into hopeless love with a white. But apart from this it has touches of splendid originality.

The story runs something like this: The Marquis of Severo, bon vivant, sportsman and the proprietor of much land in the West Indies, wishes to divorce his wife in order to marry Denise, his adopted daughter. The marchioness, who loves her husband, refuses to consent to the divorce, and in order to convince her husband that it would be useless on his part, reveals that Denise is already in love with a young engineer in the service of the marquis.

On hearing this the marquis, who lives in Paris, sends for the engineer, Andre Berval, and pretending to agree to the marriage, tells Berval that before he marries Denise he must do something to distinguish himself, and proposes that he go out to the West Indies to prospect for minerals on his property. Whatever valuable minerals are found Andre will receive his share. With his fortune thus assured, Andre gladly consents to go.

The marquis decides, however, that Berval must never return to France, and at once dispatches a letter to his overseer and confidante, Alvarez, a mulatto, suggesting to him that it would not be displeasing to him if Berval never returns.

Berval arrives in the West Indies and as it develops he soon finds himself in a row with Alvarez over Papitou (Josephine Baker). Papitou, daughter of a drunken white man and a Negro woman, is a gay young girl, full of life and little mischiefs. She detests Alvarez with his caveman style of wooing.

One day as she is about to take a swim in a stream Alvarez arrives on the scene and attacks her. Berval, however, fights him off to the intense gratitude of the young woman. That evening at one of the native dances Alvarez arrives, and taking the hand of Berval asks him to let bygones be bygones. Alvarez, however, is burning none the less for revenge and and decides to carry out the wishes of the marquis the next day.

Alvarez in the meanwhile has discovered gold on the property and has an additional reason for wishing to to get rid of the young engineer. He fears that the latter might discover his mine, and the next day starts out with Berval, accompanied by two natives.

In the meantime, back in Paris, the marquis begins to force his attention on his adopted daughter, hinting that Berval might never return. Becoming suspicious, she tells the marchioness, who at once decides to start for the West Indies and leaves unknown to the marquis, with Denise.

Back again in the Antilles, Papitous, who shows every sign of love of Berval, is much disturbed over the fact that Alvarez is taking out Berval, and taking a short cut over the mountains arrives at the spot where the four riders are on a rocky mountain. Across this mountain to another is a swinging bridge of light material and Alvarez, pointing to it, says that one must cross it to get to the region of which the marquis spoke. Berval willingly sets off, but Alvarez tells him that the bridge might not be safe and that he will send one of the natives to make sure. The man returns to say that all is well, and Berval sets out on the bridge only to have it break under him. He plunges to the precipice below while the three riders flee.

Papitou, however, has arrived on the scene and descending into the precipice, finds that Berval is only slightly hurt, a tree having broken his fall. Leaving him there, she goes in search of food and help, but as she is a long time in arriving, Berval starts off and finally comes on Alvarez and his two aids mining gold. A fight ensues, from which Berval is saved by the arrival of the native police.

Papitou is more than ever in love with Berval and she arrives home to find that the marchioness and Denise have arrived. The lovers fly to each others arms to the great pain of Papitou, who absolutely refuses to greet the two ladies. Soon after the three leave for Europe.

Papitou is disconsolate at the departure of Berval and finally decides to go to Paris. But she has no money. Her only possession is a fetish comb and when the agent demands $104 for passage she offers him the comb. Not to be outdone she swims out to the ship and finally catches onto a basket thrown overboard by a sailor and gets on board. A scene of much comedy ensues in the pursuit of her, but finally a rich pasenger agrees to pay her passage and take her on as a nurse.

Arriving in Paris she takes the children to the park and while dancing with them is seen by the proprietor of a music hall, who, recognizing her ability, engages her at a large figure. Papitou is delighted, but mostly at the thought that everybody will come to see her, and that will include Berval.

At her first performance, however, Berval is not there and she leaves in anger. The music hall proprietors, seeing their dividends in danger, are at a loss what to do. Then one of them recalls that Berval is known to a friend of his, the marquis.

Meanwhile the marquis is at home in tantrums, insisting that he will see no one and that Denise shall never marry Berval. However he receives a telephone call from the music hall man that puts him into another humor, and thereupon he begs the pardon of the marchioness and agrees to the marriage.

A few night later the marchioness gives a grand affair at her home, at which Berval is present. At the music hall Papitou is scoring a great triumph when the marquis arrives. At the sight of him she leaves her audience and flies off to the home of the marchioness with the marquis.

Arriving here the marquis leaves her in a room and then has one of the servants announce that there is a visitor for Berval. The latter goes, wondering who it could be, and when he sees Papitou and she sees him the two fly into each others arms, kissing and embracing.

The marquis now arrives with Denise and other ladies. Denise will listen to no explanation and breaks off the engagement, while the marquis strikes Berval in the face. The result is a duel on the following day. The marquis has decided to kill his opponent, but Berval fires in the air. To the surprise of all the marquis falls. Papitou, hiding in a tree, had shot him dead. After this the usual explanations follow, while Papitou, to hide her grief, plunges into her music hall work.

Miss Baker is splendid throughout with her frolicsome and original way. Her dancing is much better than at the Follies, and she is by far the most natural person in the entire cast. Many other Negroes appear in the cast and they, too, are very good, particularly in the native dances. Most of the white persons in the cast, except Alvarez, are stiff and self-conscious in comparison.

Appearing in the cast as the music hall manager is Signor Albertini, the count whom she was supposed to have married last year. Apropos of this, Miss Baker is unmarried, according to a declaration of hers at the American consulate recently. In applying for a passport she said that she was single, according to the Paris Tribune. She will leave Paris soon, according to reports.

"The Siren of the Tropics" is due for a long run in Paris. Several of the leading illustrated journals have recently carried her picture on their covers, speaking highly in praise of her film.

WHITE THEATRE FANS CROWD RACE PATRONS

Nordics Flock To Atlantic Playhouse Opened For Colored

HOUSE HAS VITAPHONE

Woods Spends $50,000 Remodelling Movie Palace

ATLANTIC CITY. — With the coming of Joe Woods into the local theatrical field as manager of the Royal Theatre the complex here has begun to change.

Up until the opening of the new playhouse the race was segregated in the Avenue movie houses, and if protests were forthcoming, was told that its patronage was not eagerly sought.

Whites Crowd House

Mr. Wood has opened one of the best movie houses at the resort and even though colored people may sit any place it is difficult for them to get seats because of Mr. Wood's white patronage. This gives the lie to the claim of white managers that unless segregation is used, the nordics will not patronize places of amusement.

The Royal has been completely renovated, at the cost of fifty thousand dollars, and an eight thousand dollar organ installed. The latest cooling and ventilating systems have been put in. Visitors to the seashore now enjoy the best pictures with Vitaphone.

Pictures appearing this week are: Pola Negri in "The Secret Hour", 'Moon of Israel', 'The Gateway of the Moon", "A Girl in Every Port", "The Sunset Legion", "Sorrows of Satan", and "Sharp Shooters".

England Bars Alberta Hunter

Authorities Refused to Extend Labor Permit of Well Known Actress

An exclusive despatch to The Amsterdam News brings the information that Miss Alberta Hunter has been refused an extension of time to remain in England by the Minister of Labor. Miss Hunter recently closed with "Showboat," after it was decided to dispense with her services to place someone in the part which she took at a cheaper rate.

Coming into prominence as a member of the cast of the original "How Come" company, Miss Hunter made quite a hit here shortly after her arrival from Chicago. As an entertainer she has been much in demand and she has also turned out some of the best records.

Some time ago she went to Europe and after looking the field over decided to remain a while. She met with success everywhere she appeared and in her spare time wrote some very interesting comments for readers of The Amsterdam News of her impressions of the people and the places she had been.

When it was decided to put a "Showboat" company in London she was among the first to be selected and she has done remarkably well to the part assigned her. She will leave Europe next Wednesday on the Ile de France for the United States, where she has contracts calling for the recording of a number of late songs. Miss Hunter is disappointed in the action taken by the Minister of Labor, as she had hoped to remain in England for a while longer.

Gilpin Opens Again In "Emperor Jones"

CLEVELAND — (ANP.) — Charles Gilpin, who won fame and the Spingarn medal for his interpretation of the title role in "Emperor Jones," opened again last night in character here Monday evening at the Little Theatre.

CHAS. GILPIN

Barrington Carter is here with the artist and has a part in the production.

Mr Gilpin came here 10 days ago as a guest of the Charles Gilpin Players, an amateur group who recently closed a two-weeks' presentation of "In Abraham's Bosom" at the same playhouse. Mrs. Hazel Mountain Walker, president of the local thespians, was hostess at a dinner tendered in honor of the visiting artist.

Theatrical – 1928

Individual Troupes, etc.

THE DANCE.

NEGRO ART LOSES IN ORIGINALITY

Loss of Spontaneity and Relaxation, Its Unique Appeal, Are Now Threatened

DANCERS and patrons of the dance on both sides of the ocean have greeted with lamentations the encroachment in increasing measure during the last few years of negro dancing, but little or no consideration seems to have been given to the other side of the question—namely, that the negro dancing itself is not being benefited by the experience. Its indisputable success is not an unmixed blessing, for in the process of Harlemization many of the best natural qualities of the negro are eliminated to such an extent that the result in most cases is nothing more than the negro's attempt to give his white audiences what they choose to consider negro dancing. It is actually as far removed from the real thing as the Tambo and Bones of the old minstrel tradition.

7-8-28

The primary characteristic of the genuine negro dancing as it is found in its native haunts, many hundreds of miles south of Harlem, is relaxation—not only physical relaxation, but mental and even moral as well. Unhappily, it is this last aspect that has attracted the white man, and the effect has been that what was once the simple and naïve expression of an uninhibited mentality has become pretty generally brazen, sophisticated and vulgar. The crude and calculated gyrations that are assigned to the mulatto chorus girl are no more akin to, the spontaneous rhythmic abandon of her Dixie heritage than are the efforts of her white colleagues to imitate them. She—and, for that matter, all other dancers, whatever their race or color—would do well to examine the natural negro dancer in his approach to the dance.

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The laziness of the Southern negro is proverbial, and it would be a thankless task to attempt to disprove it; yet there is a side to this laziness which is not only far from reprehensible but actually much to be admired. This is the ability to employ the minimum of muscular exertion in the performance of a physical action. If only one hand is necessary, the Southern negro sees no reason for making both hands work; and in his dancing the same method holds true. Instinctively he applies his energy only to the particular part of the body where it is needed to produce an effect at the moment and all the rest of the body is muscularly at ease.

This in itself is an object that dancers of the white race generally attain only by diligent effort, and in the vast majority of cases never attain at all, though its desirability is unquestionable. It allows for normal breathing even during the most violent exertion, and even renders such exertion possible to a degree and for a duration of time almost beyond the contemplation of the white dancer. Similarly, it greatly increases the range of activity by bringing into play highly unorthodox movements of the hips, the shoulders and the knees as well as of the head and neck. These movements, frequently of doubtful propriety and almost without exception grotesque, are produced, one would hazard, not because they are grotesque or improper, but because of a strong desire to leave no portion of the anatomy unresponsive to the musical impulse.

Such conservation of energy is not to be acquired solely by muscular means; it has its source in the deeper processes of the mentality, the normal negro's mentality being as relaxed as his body. He conserves mental energy as well as physical. If his interest is directed toward a specific end, it is directed there in its entirety; if he is engaged in making a movement, whether it is a large one or a small one, everything he has goes into it. There are no mental reservations. He does not worry about form or rhythm, or whether he will be criticized for this or blamed for that, and the result is that from this total absorption in what he is doing there flow form and rhythm in profusion. He has, if you will, a single-track mind without being an intensive thinker.

These two elements of relaxation, together with an inherent feeling for rhythm and suspense, constitute the distinctive elements of the true negro dance; and these very elements are what Harlemization tends to destroy. To be sure, the rhythmic qualities are too strongly entrenched to be easily disturbed, but with sophistication at such a premium it is only a question of time until even they are dulled. Even now they have assumed a stereotyped form analogous to the monotony of the bulk of jazz music which, like the dancing, is created to satisfy a market demand.

There are, of course, several individuals who stand out as striking exceptions to this state of affairs. Bill Robinson, for example, has managed to refine and adapt his work to the exigencies of the theatrical situation without sacrificing anything of the admirable quality of the negro. His single-mindedness is evidenced in his ability to hold an audience at will by the faintest and smallest of taps, as well as by his more elaborate adventures in syncopation. In his dance on the steps, it becomes clear that syncopation to him is simply a medium for building suspense. He plays with the musical phrase, off the beat until the psychological moment, then with a fine sense of theatrical effect he lands on the accent again as the phrase closes. The five steps he uses to heighten this effect, for they serve the eye as the musical beat serves the ear.

And his rhythms are no common jazz rhythms; they are filled with an unexpectedness which appeals to the listening ear and the watching eye. Superficially there is nothing that Robinson does that marks him from any other good tap dancer, and yet there are very few who can compete with him. The difference lies in the fact that he possesses and utilizes those racial gifts which a misguided public is seemingly doing its best to destroy. Ironically enough, it is those very qualities that the modern school of dancing is doing its best to acquire.

The negro has not yet proved for himself any claim to be regarded as a serious artist in his dancing. He seems to care not a whit for beauty of line or movement for its own sake. But in his grasp of relaxation and control lies a contribution to the art that is quite sufficient in itself, even if we omit the subject of rhythm of which he is obviously and admittedly a master.

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The appearance of Agnes de Mille at the Roxy last week proved just how much can be done in the way of dancing in the motion picture theatres. A charmingly staged number after the manner of Degas provided Miss de Mille an opportunity to perform her tragi-comedy of a ballet student in an attractive and appropriate environment. Interestingly enough, the audience was quick to appreciate the difficulty of her endless échappés and to applaud her for them. And the point of the dance was by no means lost. J. M.

Photo by Nicholson.

Bill Robinson in "Blackbirds of 1928," at the Liberty Theatre.

SHOWMEN SET SELVES TO INVADE BROADWAY

Miller And Lyles And Mrs. Marcus Garvey Listed Among Future Producers

'BLACKBIRDS' GET $16,000

Leslie Slates Shows For N. Y. And London

NEW YORK. — Buoyed up by the success of Lew Leslie and other white promoters who have made profitable use of race companies on Broadway, downtown New Yorkis expected to witness its greatest invasion of Harlem actors this fall.

Already Leslie, who is producing "Blackbirds of 1928" at the Liberty with weekly grosses of $16,000, is priming another company to supplement his present vehicle. Another offspring of the show name made famous by the late Florence Mills is being readied for London, it is reported.

Miller and Lyles, who closed two months ago in "Keep Shufflin'", are grooming another vehicle for Broadway, and will be producers instead of actors, it is reported. Irvin C. Miller producer of "Broadway Rastus" and "Liza", announced early in the past season that he had another Broadway planned, but would wait until his brother, Flournoy Miller, and Aubrey Lyles, had closed. Miller has been on the road in the independent houses for three months now, starring in his "Broadway Rastus"

SYMPOSIUM OF CRITIC'S REVIEWS OF "BLACKBIRDS"

Guilty and not guilty of genuine entertainment merit are the conflicting verdicts of most of the New York weekly and daily reviewers of Lew Leslie's new edition of "Blackbirds" which is making its New York debut. Most of the comments are in the vein of those below, some see some merit, others are lukewarm.

(From the "New York Age")

"BLACKBIRDS OF 1928," a revue in a prologue and two parts; lyrics by Dorothy Fields; music by Jimmy McHugh; produced by Lew Leslie. At the Liberty Theatre.

(Principals—Adelaide Hall, Bill Robinson, Aida Ward, Tim Moore, Ruth Johnson, Margie Hubbard, George W. Cooper, Lloyd Mitchell, Blue McAllister, Willard McLean, Mantan Moreland and the Plantation Orchestra, Allie Ross, conductor.

There is life aplenty in "Blackbirds of 1928," the musical revue with an all-colored cast and chorus, which Lew Leslie introduced to Broadway at the Liberty Theatre, Manhattan, last Wednesday night. There is also a full share of melody and mirth that go to make an excellent entertainment, especially attractive in the summer season. There is a laugh every minute of the way through the prodogue and two parts of the show.

The fun is not confined to scenes below the Mason-Dixon line, but laughs aplenty are provided in sketches that have their setting right in Harlem. A burlesque on "Progy," one of the season's dramatic hits, was well done. "Bear Cat Jones' Last Fight," "Getting Married in Harlem" and "Playing According to Hoyle" were spasms of fun. If for nothing else the "Blackbirds of 1928" will be talked about for the speed of its dancing. Nimble feet that cannot keep still are everywhere in the new Lew Leslie production. The plantation Orchestra with Allie Ross conducting, is a group of fine musicians.

The leading members of the cast are Adelaide Hall Bill Robinson, Aida Ward and Tim Moore, and they well deserve the applause they were given.

'LITTLE JO' SIGNS THE 'LITTLE BOOK'

PARIS, France, Sept. 6.—In town for only a few days before she goes to Berlin for ten months, Miss Josephine Baker called at the Ambassadeurs to visit Noble Sissle and to dance to the music of his popular band, now being featured at this famous society resort. The above photo shows Miss Baker autographing Sissle's little "blue book," which contains the names and comments of many celebrities, among whom are Peggy Hopkins Joyce, Irene Castle McLaughlin, Beatrice Lillie, Jascha Heifetz, Pola Negri, Henry Bernstein, famous French playwright, and many others.

HOMESICKNESS LED TO CLASSIC'S BIRTH

Actor's Longing For Dixie Inspired "Carry Me Back To Ole Virginny"

SHOWS BEGAN IN 1850

Lucca Family Cited As First Race Troupe

NEW YORK. — Homesickness and longing of the late Jim Bland for the Southland while with a troup in England in the last century was responsible for the writing of "Carry Me Back To Old Virginny", a song that graces classic programs today, according to Julian Seamon, white, writing in the New York, Sunday World.

Making a resume of theatricals of the race, the writer cites as the beginning the somewhat misty days of the jubilee singers before the Civil War. To the Lucca family is given credit for being the first troupers. This group wandered about in a wagon cavalcade from 1852 to 1879.

He continues:

"Deep in the dust of older libraries repose crude handbills, announcing the forthcoming appearances of Lew Johnson's Georgia Minstrels, which played the plantations of the solid South in 1852. But the dust of years has obscured further mention of this organization. It is probable that Charles Callender, a white showman, organized the first Negro minstrel troupe of any account in America. This was in 1868.

Shows Prosper

"Negro entertainment seems to have blossomed beautifully after the Civil War. Slavery had been abolished and the Negro was beginning to find himself. Individuals and companies sprang up and prospered.

"Most of these entertainers confined their talents to "variety" halls, then the backbone of vaudeville in this country. One saw and heard Lyles and Lyles, Charles Cruso, monologist; Blind Tom, who played the piano; Mlle. Selika and Sisserette Jones, called the 'Black Patti". All of these became popular between 1870 and 1890.

Troupe In England

"John Haviland took a minstrel troupe to England in these years and staid Britons were amazed. Jim Bland, one of the company, became terribly homesick. He met another Negro one afternoon "What can I do for you?" asked Bland. "I don't want any money," the other answered. 'All I want is to get back to old Virginia.'

"Bland told the story later to Wallace King, tenor of the company, who urged that he write a song. The result was 'Carry Me Back To Old Virginny'. I cannot vouch for this tale, but there is sufficient corroboration in newspapers and periodicals of that day to make it plausible.

"Haviland's Minstrels were not the first to invade Great Britain. An English journalist, in 1866, had organized a troupe of former slaves and made quite an impression. But the chill of English temperament must have discouraged their efforts, for it is recorded that 'the company disintegrated because most of the members did not like the country.'

The Hyer Sisters are supposed to have been the first Negro women to appear on the American stage. In 1877 they were starred in a play known as 'The Underground Railroad' and 'Out of Bondage.'

Then Bob Kelly introduced a Negress to the variety halls as his partner, the first of her race to enter the realm of vaudeville. It was John W. Isham, who produced the first real Negro musical comedy in 1895. It was called 'The Octaroon'."

Theatrical - 1929
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK HERALD

MAY 19 1929

Negro Theater No New Thing; It Started Hereabouts in 1821

By C. A. Leonard

DIGGERS and delvers into the beginning of things find the name Ira Aldrich when they search for facts concerning the American Negro and the stage. As far back as 1789 Aldrich was acclaimed a great Othello, one of the greatest, but he never performed in this country. All his stage appearances were in England and the tradition is handed down that royalty often swooned or was rendered limp by the dramatic intensity of his acting. Thus the Negro of today ought not to be without some hereditary acting genius.

However, there appears to be a great hiatus in Aframerican dramatic talent bridging Ira Aldrich and the first colored performers of any import. Perhaps there were earlier attempts to worship at the shrine of the nubian Thespis, but none has been handed down for the records prior to 1821-'23, which saw the first organized attempt by Negroes of New York City to establish a theater of their own. The star of the troupe was one Hewlett, first name unknown, and the most successful play was "Richard III." Their theater was situated in the African Grove at the corner of Bleecker and Mercer Streets. But the project, according to G. C. D. Odell, in his "Annals of the New York Stage," was short-lived. The authorities feared civic disturbances and ordered the players to appear before a magistrate. Upon a promise never to act Shakespearean drama again, they were dismissed.

The next important dramatic movement, and the first which the old folks and other authoritative persons in Harlem can call to mind, were the Hyar sisters, who thrived about 1870 in all Western cities where the colored population was sizable and theater-going. The Hyar sisters had been well known as concert singers among their race, but failure to make the popularity grade in white music circles prompted their producing venture. With Dad Lucas as their mainstay, they presented a limited repertoire in which the most popular fare was "The Octoroon" and "Out of Bondage." Dad Lucas later became famous under the Frohman management as the original Uncle Tom. But the most versatile member of the troupe, it is said, was Tom Brown, whom many a dusky old woman still remembers with fluttering heart.

Knowledge of other negroid dramatic enterprises is not available again until 1897, when Lew Payton, who played Pa Williams in "Harlem," attempted an all-colored version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," himself playing Uncle Tom.

"Black Patti's Troubadours"

The beginning of the twentieth century was more prodigious in nurturing colored theatricals. Between 1901 and 1904 were crystallized what were perhaps the most important and practical movements toward the realization of acting equality. In a way they might be called the emancipators of the Negro actor, for unconsciously they were his training school, his beginning as a factor in American drama, a beginning which only his present status on Broadway makes manifest.

These were the efforts of the brothers Tutt (Salem Whitney and J. Homer) and Jed Green. The former were actors who decided to branch out as producers. So Salem Tutt-Whitney, as he was called, wrote and directed "The Ex-President of Liberia," a musical comedy, and also played its blackface comedian. This toured and retoured all the available colored theaters in the country for about five years. Upon its cessation, Salem Tutt wrote "Black Patti's Troubadours" and toured with it until 1908. In 1909 the brothers Tutt settled down to the experiment of a stock company in Knoxville, Tenn. with the idea of venturing one dramatic offering in every four musicals. The experiment was short-lived, lasting less than a full season, and shortly afterward the Tutts returned to musical things exclusively.

Jed Green was responsible for the first dramatic movement recorded for the North. He founded the Pekin Stock Company in Chicago. The group got its name from the old Pekin Theater. Among those who got their start with the Pekinese are Charles Gilpin, Miller and Lyles, Lieutenant Tim Brynn, J. Francis Mores, Pearl White (not the former serial film star), Ernest Hogan, Lawrence Chenault, William Cook, Joe Jordan, Jessie Ship and Lotta Grady. All are now up in the world of Negro thespians.

The Beginnings in Chicago

Another stock company was founded almost simultaneously at the Indiana Theater in Chicago. Charles Moore was its chief attraction and he performed colored versions of such plays as "My Lady's Garter" and "The Voice in the Dark." Things there were more or less uneventful, since the growth of the Negro theater is marked mainly by the development of its stars. Thus nothing was heard of the Indiana Theater again until 1909, when Suzie Sutton came to the fore in "The Return of Eve." The Pekin, however, continued as the really enterprising unit. It adventured with new plays and players prodigally. In 1908, for instance, it made history with the advent of Clarence Mews in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and in "Hearts of Dixie"—the stage play, not the picture.

Then, about 1912, Philadelphia's colored theatrical sector was heard from. Evelyn Ellis, who played one of the leads in "Porgy," beguiled with "Goat Alley." But Chicago continued in the dramatic lead up to and including 1916, when the Pekin presented Cleo Desmond and Andrew Bishop (the same Bishop who is now playing Kid Vamp in the Chicago company of "Harlem") in "Parlor, Bedroom and Bath," and Shirlette Freeman in "The Brute." A year later Andrew Bishop was instrumental in starting a colored dramatic company at the Howard Theater in Washington, playing "The Servant in the House."

In 1917 an actress named Anita Bush, fired with the success of her brethren in Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington, started a playlet company at the Lincoln Theater. New York being the goal of all actors, white or black, Miss Bush had no difficulty in attracting the best of her race from other cities. When they were banded together dissension apparently arose within the ranks, and so Charles Gilpin moved his compatriots over to the Lafayette Theater and founded the now famous Lafayette Players.

The membership listed those who have since come to be regarded as the dramatic stars of the Negro acting profession—Charles Gilpin, Abbie Mitchell, Laura Bowman, Clarence Mews, Cleo Desmond, Ida Anderson, Andrew Bishop, Sidney Kirkpatrick, Evelyn Ellis, Charles Olden, A. B. De Comathiere, Jack Carter and Frank Wilson. Those among them who later became famous for their characterizations in ofay (white) plays are Charles Gilpin who was seen in "Abraham Lincoln," "The Emperor Jones" and "White Mule," and Abbie Mitchell in "Coquette" and "Porgy." Another Negro actress to win favor among "ofay" audiences is Rose McClendon whose performances in "Porgy," "Earth" and "In Abraham's Bosom," were tantamount to stardom.

The foregoing by no means exhausts the list of present-day Negro players. In 1917 Boston was the scene of the attempts of Sterling Wright to make off with the laurels of his forerunner, Ira Aldrich. His Othello apparently took the Bostonians by storm, for the Lafayette Players invited him down to New York and he gave a series of performances here. And in 1918, risen out of comparative obscurity, there were Emily Hapgood's Colored Players, who were so compelling a troupe that Robert Edmund Jones staged one of their productions at the Garrick Theater, "Simon the Cyrinian." This was probably the first instance of a colored company holding the stage in the glare of the Broadway lights.

According to my informant, Billy Pierce, the veteran dance instructor who happened to be the manager of the theater in Norfolk at the time, The Attucks had one Luke Scott as their guiding spirit. For four years or more he presented colored versions of such popular successes as "Way Down East," "Bertha the Sewing Machine Girl," "Madame X" and "999." These were made unique by the fact that Negro audiences were most unsympathetic toward their serious themes and in order to make them attractive blackface comedians had to be dragged in by the heels for each.

In "999," for example, the hero was a locomotive engineer who knelt on the cowcatcher of the onrushing train and scooped up the beautiful heroine in the nick of time. Scott's favorite stunt was to do acrobatics across the length of the prop engine as it lumbered and snorted onto the stage. Then, by cooing a few words of love as the train approached the prostrate form of the girl on the tracks, had her leap into his arms at the crucial moment. For this climax, and burlesques of similar nature the audiences came back night after night, else Mr. Scott could never have endured for such long seasons, for Negro audiences are sparse, even in such Negro-abounding towns as Norfolk, Va.

Though the Negro is generally regarded as a comedian first and a dramatic actor last, the Negro musical field had comparatively no outstanding personalities, save Bert Williams and George Walker, until "Shuffle Along," the first musical comedy designed for white consumption, came into the ken of Broadway. But the Negro musical comedy stage was not without fine representation during the intervening years. Salem Tutt-Whitney and J. Homer Tutt, shortly after their dramatic venture in Knoxville, Tenn., took over Gus Hill's "Smart Set" company and called its new version "The Smarter Set." It prospered during its tour and Whitney and Tutt thus were enabled to produce something like twelve musical comedies between 1909 and 1915, or at the rate of two a year. They helped to bring out such colored musical comedy talent as Mamie Smith, the phonograph songstress; Adelaide Hall and Eddie Rector (of "Blackbirds"), Blanche Calloway, Harriette Calloway (star of the second "Blackbirds" company), Blanche Thompson (of "Show Boat") and Margaret Simms. Those in the colored dramatic sector who first got their start with Whitney and Tutt are Charles Olden, Leigh Whipper (of "Porgy"), Clarence Robinson, Alonzo Fenderson (of the Chicago company of "Harlem") and Edna Wise Barr and Nat Cash, of the resident "Harlem" company at the Times Square.

The humble though distorted efforts of The Attucks cannot be overlooked as contributory to the development of Negro histrionism in America. The Attucks flourished in Norfolk, Va., in 1917. Most of the colored theaters in the country, incidentally, are named Attucks Theater, so called in tribute to Crispus Attucks, a Negro whose memory is perpetuated histrionically by a statue on the Boston Common. Attucks was reputed to be an entertainer in his own small way and in the riot against the British in 1775 he was shot down by the Redcoats, a circumstance which made him the first human killed in defense of this country. The more facetious members of the "Harlem" company had another theory. They are inclined to think that he had performed for the British the day before, and that the British, upon recognizing him in the front ranks of the rioters, instantly revenged themselves.

It is interesting to note that the total number of Negro theaters in America is approximately 400, and that most of them alternate between musical and dramatic stock. Eighty of these theaters comprise a sort of vaudeville chain known as T. O. B. A., or

"Toba." Its full name is Theater Owners' Booking Association, but the incorrigibles among the colored vaudevillians prefer to interpret the initials as representing "Tough on Black Actors." The most popular performers on the circuit is a team called "Butterbeans and Susie," or Mr. and Mrs. Edwards in private life. Their reputed salary is $700 a week, which indubitably makes them the biggest stars on the chain.

But the invasion of manuscripts depicting Negro life, coupled with the cycle of kindred photoplays, is bringing the colored dramatic actor into the foreground of contemporary histrionism, and possibly into his deserving own for he is emotionally equipped to give the art of acting a savor of genuineness.

OUR SHOWS

An Opinion by a Stranger Within Our Gates

By DOUGLAS EVERETTE

AS one coming straight from Jamaica, B. W. I., to the United States for the first time, and being specially interested in theatricals, my first desire was to see and form an appraisement of the various attractions served up in New York. My attention was first directed to what is known here as "colored shows," and in expressing an opinion on them I desire to say at the outset that I have not yet witnessed any white shows. I also wish to say that in Jamaica there are no such things as colored or white shows. The presentations there are arranged by clubs or societies according to social class and are all amateur. I am therefore judging the shows I have seen in New York irrespective of class, color or creed and purely from a histrionic point of view.

Good theatrical companies from England and Canada frequently visit Jamaica, but the only colored show seen there was the William Benton Revue Company, which (with all due respect to them) was far below the standard expected by Jamaicans from even second rate amateurs, much less from a so-called professional company from America. Needless to say, they were not patronized after the first night, and their stay was of short duration.

Taking them in the order mentioned, I visited first the Alhambra, where I saw "Honey Bees," "Saved From the Harem," etc. Next I migrated to the Royale to have a look at "Bamboola" and ended up at Hudson's and "Hot Chocolates." Comparisons are always odious and I do not purpose to be invidious in this article, and so any comments that I make must be accepted in a general sease. The three shows seen convinced me that there is an abundance of really first-class talent and I thoroughly enjoyed myself. I appraise that talent in the following order: (1) Dancing, (2) comedy, (3) singing, (4) dramatic ability.

1. **Dancing**—The dancing, whether by the ensemble or by individuals, could not be bettered and in the case of the former spoke volumes for the training received. Difficult movements were executed in perfect time and unison and the occasions were rare that I was able to detect a fleeting lapse. There are just two things I would mention: one is a tendency now and then on the part of just one girl to outdo the others, which not only mars the beauty of the number but if occurring at certain stages may appear vulgar. There is a very thin dividing line between the truly artistic and the coarsely sensual, and dancers run a great risk when they attempt to individualize in an ensemble. My other comment is that, in my humble opinion, there is a superfluity of dancing in all these shows and one is apt to get a little tired of it, good as it is. As individuals "Derby," "Jazzlips" Richardson and Baby Cox will go far.

2. **Comedy**—All the comedians are good, and some are superexcellent. They are distinct, witty and they keep you laughing. Among others I must mention "Ashes" of the Alhambra, Dusty Fletcher and John Mason of "Bamboola" and of "Hot Chocolates." Most satisfying of all is that the comedy is clean and wholesome and therefore enjoyable by all.

3. **Singing**—This, in my opinion, is rather on the weak side, both individually and in chorus. In none of the three shows can I say that I heard any singing of note or any really true voice; in fact, the orchestra seemed to hold the sway and just when one would grow tired of straining an ear to catch the voice dancers would appear and the singer fade from view. Perhaps this is why we get so much dancing. The best of the lot was Miss Isabell Washington ("Bamboola"), whose amazing and vivacious personality covered up any deficiencies she possessed in vocal excellence.

4. **Dramatic Ability**—Of this there was little inserted on the programs, and what little there was of it was not up to much. Perhaps that is why there was so little. A little more attention paid to this branch of art and a little more of it on a bill of fare would enhance the enjoyment and come as a welcome break in the whirl of comedy and spirited dancing. I know that life is so serious that audiences need light recreation, but the serious side of life properly and capably represented is always acceptable. Some people find as much pleasure in crying as in laughing. Note "The Singing Fool."

Orchestra and Management.

Lastly, I would pay a high tribute to the music supplied by the orchestras and the stage management of the shows. America is the home of jazz, and the live, peppy music was the last word, not to mention the really artistic accompaniment of the various songs, dances, etc.

Nothing annoys and frets an audience like unnecessary waiting, and I am sure that not even the most exacting person could find the slightest portion of a cause for complaint at any of these shows. Scene after scene followed without hesitation and I who have had to do with directing amateur shows and nearly became gray at times just sat and marveled at the finished productions.

I congratulate the unknown (to me) producers and stage managers and wish them every success in all future ventures.

Jules Bledsoe Pleases Thousands at the Palace

The many friends of Jules Bledsoe, the singer whose work in Ziegfeld's "Show Boat" created such a sensation, were pleasurably surprised to learn that he had been recalled to the Palace Theatre after making such a splendid impression at the same house but a few weeks back.

Bledsoe has added to his repertoire "El Toreador" from the famous opera of "Carmen" and "Eli, Eli." The conclusion at the end of these two numbers was the signal for an outburst of applause seldom heard at the Palace, despite the wonderful reception which he had previously received when rendering that favorite entitled "Old Man River," the song that will be associated with the name of Bledsoe as long as he lives.

The success which this performer has been enjoying for many years has induced many to believe that it has made him somewhat temperamental, but the truth of the matter is that Bledsoe is unusually intelligent and has a habit of standing up for his rights regardless of where fortune casts him. Jules Bledsoe is also blessed with a certain modesty that has made for him scores of friends out of the profession and at no time during his remarkable rise in the theatrical firmament has he ever entertained the idea of going around seeking applause for what he has accomplished, being perfectly satisfied to let his splendid work speak for itself.

Bledsoe has refused on account of his work all requests to appear in Harlem, but it is no secret that when the time is ripe he will gladly appear for one of the midnight performances staged by the Dramatic Editor of The Amsterdam News in behalf of charity.

Moviedom has It's Faults, Is Story of One

"Insider" Tells Of Many Obstacles Facing Negro Artist

NOTE: *So much has been written anent the success of the Negro in "talkies"—much of which is all rot. The Chicago Whip, for the benefit of its readers wired its western correspondent to visit Hollywood and remain on the inside until all the facts were obtained. We herewith present the details of his findings after a week's visit with some of the colored performers and directors now employed in moviedom. You will note tha we have ommitted the name of our correspondent and not unintentionally).*

(*By An Observer Who Knows*)

HOLLYWOOD, Cal., July 17—The aftermath of a big ballyhoo—That the Negro would take a prominent place in the World's greatest enterprise, is here, and "What have you." Not even gravy. Instead of advancing in this line of work, the Negro has slipped and is gradually being forced out of the business. Not because of any incompetency on the part of this talented people — but because of the baneful methods heretofore employed by the white producers.

Lapsing into the vernacular of sound recording experts—nine out of every ten uncultured Negro voices kick back OK on the playback, while seven out of every ten cultured white voices register impossible. The Negro got a bad start from the kick-off—his first two chances were muffed by silly white writers and directors who knew very little or nothing about the traits of the people they tried to describe or direct in their efforts to produce a handkerchief-headed and cornfield shows with ordinary talent.

Real Flop

"Hearts in Dixie." "Hallelujah" One a public flop, the other made its nosedive a private affair Both were intended to prove epics of the screen. To begin with, both of these stories were off-color one rotten the other putrid. (Figure the difference). And as a result after adding the cost of production and exploiting, the producers arrived at the conclusion that Barnum knew his onions, for these gentlemen had committed an unpardonable sin as hunters in the land of "Big game" They tied a bag containing a cool million to the neck of a mule deer and then bombarded the poor fellow with blank cartridges, and now the poor fellow is like "yesterday"—they'll never see him again.

Poor Attempt

Now when the world asks how-come—these same writers, producers and directors make a sad attempt to charge these failures to twelve million Negroes Well They had to blame somebody, so why not place the load on as many shoulders as possible? It makes the load easier. Had they selected a real cast from the speaking stage and engaged such men as Will Elkins, Will Marion Cook and others who are fully capable to train and direct their choruses Empoyed men like Clarence Muse Spencer Williams, Jr. and others who know something about Negro life and its presentation to the general public—things would have been different—Oh, so different!

Silent Drama

In the heydey of the silent drama, one could use any type of talent together with a good title writer on the staff to do the talking, but now since the advent of the talking picture, every tub must sit on its own bottom. The old type of Negro performer passed out with the old style drama, yet wise casting agents are trying to use these has-beens in this new era and so far none have made the grade. We know that the solid south is up in arms against any form of public presentation in which the Negro is given opportunity to show his real worth to the world at large by their reception of "Uncle Tom's Cabin" and the unfavorable comment registered against Our Gang Comedies on account of Farina's prowess as a star among the kiddies of the white race and as a result, the powers are afraid to take a chance on financing such productions because it means the end of their business in the southland. The boys from Dixie are always in the saddle when it comes to the children of Ham

So if the American Negro would give the talented members of the Race a chance to become doers in this great industry, they must pave the way to success for them by supporting the productions of their own pictures, by their own people and for world wide presentation.

Remember, that Motion pictures used to the proper advantage, can do more toward fostering the advancement of the Negro race than any other medium or method Talking pictures were made to order for Negro voices—this is your great opportunity—take advantage of it!

Ethel Barrymore Takes Dancing Lessons from Billie Pierce

NEW YORK.—In "Starlet Sister Mary," a new Schubert stage show, Miss Ethel Barrymore, of stage and screen fame, will appear in blackface. Not only that but Miss Barrymore must learn to hoof, which is vernacular for dance. She is now taking shuffle lessons from Billie Pierce, colored, one of America's greatest dancing directors. Mr. Pierce was chosen as the one suitable teacher for Miss Barrymore.

Billie Pierce is a Washington product.

Theatrical-1929

Individual Troupes, etc.

FROM THE SLUMS OF ST. LOUIS TO THE TOAST OF GAY PARIS AN IDOL OF THE SILVER SCREEN

Courier
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Inimitable Josephine Scaled the Ladder of Her Dreams More Quickly Than the Girl of the Fairy Tale; a Born Comedienne, At the Age of Ten She Organized a Little Theater

11/16/29

Story by Maurice Rochambeau, internationally famous French Journalist.

Story published by The Pittsburh Courier through special arrangement with Jack Goldberg, managing director of Gold Talking Pictures, Inc., producers of Josephine Baker's screen triumph, "The Siren of the Tropics," now being shown at the leading theatres throughout the country.

IT IS a far cry from meager beginnings to great ends. . . . .just as it is far cry from the slums of St. Louis to the glitter and bauble of sophisticated Paris! But that is the story of Josephine Baker, the modern Cinderella. Not even the little girl of the fairy tale scaled the ladder of her dreams more quickly and completely than did Josephine Baker. To the little brownskin girl, fate gave no glass slippers save her dancing shoes; no fairy godmother watches over her destiny save the ambition and ability which burned within her heart.

In recounting the romantic history of Jo Baker there is always the temptation to embellish her deeds, for few personalities have ever won public admiration on such a wide scale. If one who writes of the brilliant star, and her climb to the firmament of Fame, is guilty of imparting more luster to her crown than she deserves in the estimation of some of her critics, it is because her critics see her through the eyes of the unimaginative. But to the critical element let us flash this admonition: Point out to us a single example, in fiction, whose career has been so replete with obstacles, so replete with hard-won romance as the career of Jo Baker.

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LET US turn back the wheels of Time to the third day of June, 1906. No dramatist could conceive of a more discouraging setting. . . . than that into which the baby Josephine Baker came to make her bow to Life. She herself minces no words. She says of her arrival into the world, "I was born in the slums of St. Louis!" The outlook for this infant was even distinctly less promising than the outlook for Lincoln when he was born in the cabin in rural Illinois. Lincoln's battle with society was as nothing at the beginning compared with that which faced Josephine Baker!

* * * *

THE city into which she came on that day in early June strikes one as a co-incidence. . . .St. Louis. It is strange but true, this swirling municipality of the middle west was founded by the French, who encountered such hardships and difficulties coming all the way from far off Europe to christen it in honor of their own St. Louis. It is stranger, and just as true, that Jo Baker, the helpless baby in arms, was to travel the opposite path. . .was destined to go from her native America, over thorny paths, encountering hardships and difficulties, to the very country of the founders of St. Louis there to capture the great capital of France with her artistry!

* * * *

WHEN the glad tidings were spoken: "It's a girl," the large Baker family. .consisting of her great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, father, two sisters and a brother. .little realized that the familiar announcement ushered into their midst a child genius who would someday be the fete of nations! The arrival of little Josephine presented a measure of worry to her parents. Times were very hard, and the support of the new baby was, even though a labor of love, nevertheless a financial drain. So acute was the poverty of Jo's parents that the mother and father were forced to separate so that each could find employment to make ends meet! But above the barking of the wolf sounded the frequently discussed plans that the child, under any conditions, would have an education. . .something which had been denied both parents.

* * * *

AS THE days of early childhood passed, the joy of earthly companionship. . .the joy of living with those we love. .was suddenly broken for Josephine Baker. Swiftly the hand of the Grim Reaper took away not only Josephine's great-grandmother, but also the one who is nearest to every child. . .her mother. Those tragedies which followed in swift succession forced the child to live with her father who gave her the fondest of care and planned for her to begin her education while her brother and two sisters helped support the family.

* * *

SO IT was at the tender age of five Josephine Baker first toddled off to school. There was something about her carefree behavior in the schoolroom which is a key to her personality in after life. Like so many children she was mischievous and full of fun. As a result she was very popular with her schoolmates. . .and the victim of frowns from the teachers. Her frequent pranks. . .among which was the tendency every now and then to stick out her small red tongue at her stern instructors. . . resulted in her removal from school and her transfer to another. In the latter institution of learning she was considered unusually bright and very well liked. Her favorite study was history. This is what she told a reporter from a Paris newspaper who interviewed her some months ago when she was being idolized in the French capital:

". . .I loved history. That was my hobby. I could not read enough about what the various races of the world had done from the beginning of time. As I read about them in print, these races seemed to come to life. . .all bedecked in the costumes of the various periods. . . Once, I confess, I cried to become a queen. I visioned kings with long, upturned shoes. Always they wore long, flowing robes as long as the streets. . .and all the queens were blondes! They always walked in stately fashion up and down. But it was the kings and not the queens who captivated me most That is, the good kings. The bad kings I always wanted to kill. In the conflicts between the powerful kings and their oppressed subjects, I always took sides with the poor people!"

* * *

THESE flights of childhood fancy are no less admirable in Josephine Baker than in any other youngster. They show the power of her imagination at an early age and a sense of justice which is an all too rare virtue.

At the age of 10 Josephine Baker started her theatrical career. Down in the basement of her house she organized a "little theatre." Most conveniently for the enterprising child, someone had stored there a number of empty crates on which were stenciled the names of commercial products they once contained. Josephine Baker remembers to this day that the largest and most handsome of these cases was brightly emblazoned with the words "New Zealand Peaches." The packing cases would make such a fine platform on which to dance. And they did, for youthful Jo put them together and lo! there was a nice smooth surface of the first stage on which the girl who was someday to become one of the great stars of her time flashed her flying feet! The audiences consisted of tots from the neighborhood. Every night the program changed and the admission was always the same to see Jo Baker dance. . . .one pin! What a vast change time was to make!

* * *

ONE OF the problems which confronted the young producer was the changing of costumes. The greatest luxury for performer and patron was when good fortune, in the shape of crackling firewood and charcoal, came to take away the almost unbearable dampness and fill the basement with welcome and warmth. Then it was that Jo would put on her costume close to the fire.

From the seeds which were implanted in the child's heart as she thrilled juvenile onlookers, there was to spring a mighty tree of talent which would some day thrill kings, princes, earls and dukes. . . and people from every walk of life on three continents! It is indeed a far cry from meager beginnings to great ends. . . . .from the slums of St. Louis to the glitter and bamble of sophisticated Paris. Fate had marked Josephine Baker! Let us follow her as she climbs the ladder to stardom!

Talented Players In The Theatre Guild's Production Of "Porgy"

(Reading left to right)—Leigh Whipper as the "crab-man;" Percy Verwayne as "Sporting Life;" Evelyn Ellis as "Bess;" Rose McClendon as "Serena;" Frank Wilson as "Porgy;" Jack Carter as "Crown," and Georgette Harvey as "Maria." With the New York cast and London cast of sixty-five players, "Porgy" will be the big attraction at English's opera house for three days, beginning Thursday, December 5th, with popular matinee Saturday.

'PORGY' TO PLAY 3 DAYS AT THE ENGLISH

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"Porgy," one of the outstanding successes of the New York Theatre Guild, with its celebrated colored cast, comes to English's opera house for the three days, beginning next Thursday, December 5th with matinee on Saturday.

Dramatized by DuBose and Dorothy Heyward from Mr. Heyward's novel of the same name, and first produced by the Theatre Guild more than two years ago, "Porgy" has established itself in a unique position among the folk-plays of the American theatre. It has played three separate engagements in New York totalling a run of over a year, it captured London where it played for 11 weeks last summer and it has established rec-centers.

"Porgy" is all sense, and sound, and motion, amazingly fresh and vigorous of action. It is full, too, of color and throbbing with curiously insistent rhythm that gets somehow into one's pulses. Unhackneyed spirituals are sung as they are heard in the south. But the heart of the play, the circumstances that make it a document as well as a drama, are found in its sharp and searching biographies culled from the superstitious humanity swarming about the once-proud mansions of the retreating white gentry.

Gloriously acted by a company of sixty-five players, only three of which are white, "Porgy" illustrates conclusively the directorial genius of young Rouben Mamoulian, the Russo-Armenian who thus gained his first laurels in New York. He has since done "Marco Millions" and "Wings Over Europe" for the Guild and is slated for three new Guild productions this season.

The colorful triple-deck settings of Catfish Row are authentic, being done by Cleon Throckmorton after a visit to Charleston, S. C. the locale of the play. The scenes and groupings have been hailed as an expressional note of unparalleled originality.

In the cast of revue-like proportions are Frank Wilson, Rose McClendon, Evelyn Ellis, Jack Carter, Georgette Harvey, Percy Verwayne, Hayes Pryor, Wesley Hill, Erskine Sanford, Leigh Whipper, Morris McKenny, Dorothy Paul, Richard Huey, Ella Madison, Garrett Minturn and the boy's band from the Jenkins orphanage of Charleston.

FETCHIT TELLS HOW HE GOT HIS NAME

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CHICAGO, Dec. 20.—Stepin Fetchit, noted comedian, who appears in "Salute," at the Michigan, Sunday, Monday and Tuesday, has revealed how he came to assume this unusual stage name. During the time that he performed as a rubber of thoroughbred race horses he became very much attached to one by the name of Step and Fetchit." Thinking this a much more 'catchy' title than Lincoln Theodore Perry, which he was originally christened, he assumed the name of Stepin Fetchit at his first stage appearance as a medicine show performer.

His exceptionally clever character portrayals have made him nationally famous, a lazy schuffle, fadeaway voice and sunny disposition being his most outstanding characteristics.

'BLACK APRIL' TO BE PRODUCED BY SHUBERT

Julia Peterkin's 'Black April," book on Negro Life of the South Carolina plantations, will be produced by the Shuberts sometime during the early part of 1930 with an all colored cast.

All-Colored Drama

Katrleen Kirkwood's all-colored drama, "Malinda," with song and dance, is planning to open soon at one of the theatres off Broadway. This production with Bee Freeman, Rick Chester, Fay Harper, Mercedes Gilbert, Ida Bennett, Rasa White, Pubh and Mack and 50 others, is taken from a book on Negro life which starts in the South and ends in the speakeessies and cabarets of Harlem.

Cab Calloway With "Hot Chocolates"

Cab Calloway, Baltimorean and nd borther of the popular Blanche Calloway, has repladed Paul Bass as juvenile in "Hot Chocolates," Broadway attraction at the Hudson Theatre.

Cab Calloway is also master of ceremonies with the Alabamians, an orchestra playing the Savoy ballroom.

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Individual Troupes, etc.

ading to the Mirth of a Nation

BY THE EDITOR.

ASIDE from the pleasure which it has afforded thousands, the coming of King Vidor's "Hallelujah" has also served to disclose some of the brethren barking through the columns of sundown newspapers as no critics at all, at all. Their academic fulminations, they would have us believe, come from a source of learning which leaves them past masters of the art with all else but shoddy imitators.

These gentlemen, after ascending the rostrum, with a glass of water in one hand and their diplomas in another, present such a ludicrous figure one cannot help but confess that the almost forgotten film that tickled the risabilities of the country has come to life again. That famous contribution to the motion picture industry is known as "The Mirth of a Nation."

With a barrage from field pieces and machine guns they are taking Mr. Vidor to task for not sending forth to the white millions a picture replete with the accomplishments of Negroes. Like in some of the productions of one Oscar Micheaux they would have us arriving at Villa Navarro in the Rolls-Royce we do not own, and there until the wee hours of the morning trip the light fantastic and in spare moments doing our durndest to act like Mr. Eddie for whom we must crawl out the next morning with rag and duster.

Behold, the Ninety and Nine must be shown trying to appear at home in an atmosphere in which they do not belong! Mr. Vidor, with that business acumen for which the American white man is noted, must depart from the principles of his industry and sink oodles of dollars in something which would receive not only the cold shoulder at the hands of the white brother and sister to whom Mr. Vidor without any unusual display of intelligence fully recognizes he must play to earn the filthy lucre, but the glorious ha, ha, even in those temples of art run by the Hebrew for the edification of those of sundown hue.

Like the braying animal atop which Zeke rode when he was given the razz by Chick and her gambler friend, they assume a pose like citoyens and not the subjects of a nation not fully benevolent where we as a race are concerned. A citizen from the darkest part of the Soviet Republic suddenly acquiring knowledge and for the first time reading their contributions to the said "Birth of an Onion" would for the time being imagine they speak with the backing of a people owning temples of art for the propagation of the drama and the speaker himself a disciple who has risen on the glories of the artistic achievement fostered by the proletariat.

Let us now, to the surprise of these individuals, dissect their blatant roar which they have kidded themselves into believing is a classic contribution to the world of art and letters. We pick from the heap a non mot representative of the minds vegetating in the stone age and which the publishers of the publication we now have in mind apparently kidded themselves into believing is something wonderful from the manner in which they dished it up to us with its accompanying flourish.

After telling us to prepare ourselves for a learned dissertation on the drama, we are forced to skip three or four healthy paragraphs of blurbs before coming down to what the gentleman has deluded himself into believing is a hot disclosure of the ignorance of King Vidor. Zeke, he tells us, while clearly less strongly built than Hot Shot, the gambler, takes a revolver (you laugh here) from the latter after he has drawn it and is pointing it at the rustic. Zeke, my children, to the eye which has been forced to observe athletes for a generation, is far from being less strongly built than Hot Shot. Zeke is the perfect picture of pure bone and muscle built up by hard toil on the old plantation while Hot Shot presents the perfect figure of the gambler who toils 'way into the early morning hours at the gaming table. His is an occupation that was never known to add strength to the human frame. His life in the balance, Zeke made a lightning-like move which has been made a thousand times on the frontiers of this broad United Land, aye, even on the teeming east side of our fair city and the environs of what was once known as the Tenderloin or Hell's Kitchen. That any person is without the knowledge that a gun has been wrested from a cowardly bully and thief by even a consumptive when moved with the injustice of the moment is something to give us pause in this day and time with a demand that our self-appointed teachers of the drama come down from their high places and get a touch of Real Life.

Had the writer of that contribution to the mirth of a nation plumbed the depths of a Myrtle avenue, Hudson avenue in the Navy Yard District or the inner reaches of San Juan Hill in the days "when knighthood was in flower," he would know that even a hick can have the realization brought home to him in a moment of sanity that he was done out of his hard earned toil by crooked dice. We were once a hick (perhaps even now), and refuse to deny it for the momentary applause of Seventh or Lenox avenue. Another point and a good one If the gentleman would but turn to the editor of his publication who is fully conversant with the accomplishments of such men as Sam Langford, Joe Gans and many of the other fighters of a bygone day, he will be told that the semblance of great strength over a smaller opponent does not always spell victory for the giant, even when the latter's courage is bolstered up by the possession of a gun of which he is as much in mortal fear of firing when given the steely gaze as er—er—er—er, well, as must not mention names here.

He sees the impossible when Zeke is given the razz by Chick and Hot Shot in a gathering friendly to Zeke. Hot Shot, the gentleman seems to forget, has a terrible reputation as a bully, and fools without the courage of a lion have been known to heckle those they dislike even though they fully recognize the hostile atmosphere in which they find themselves for a moment. We know one man right here in Harlem who could enter any theatre, interrupt the best show being well received and applauded by an appreciative audience and get away with it simply because he has a reputation for being a "bad man" and not a soul would attempt to lay a hand upon him. There's nothing new in that especially when the yokels are gathered to "tell it to the lord" in prayer and have convinced themselves they are a peaceful people.

Lord, forgive us this moment. Because Chick happens to be a frail girl she could not wield a heavy poker with enough strength to place even Jack Johnson 'hors de combat' if she caught him in the right place with the first stroke! A woman, and a mighty frail one at that, waving a shade roller some weeks back created havoc with a longshoreman down there on Fifth avenue. Admitting that Chick and her man had all day to leave before the fallen Zeke returned home, doesn't the drama teach us to use our imagination at times? Many things could have conspired to keep Chick and Hot Shot longer in the place than they had hoped.

In the drama of life comes a time when the best of us when faced with tragedy stark and real do the wrong thing in the right place. Real observers have seen that so often it is only those who see without observing find room for marvelling at the fact that Hot Shot stopped short after the buggy had been broken down and Chick was about to cash in. Emotion filled his breast. Should he return and help administer to the girl in the face of a tragedy which had perhaps left Zeke spent with the force of it, or should he run? Both he and Zeke were now losers and perhaps this sudden entry of Death to the beloved little Chick had made an instant change in the hearts of both of them. Then suddenly it come home to Hot Shot that the Gods of Revenge had entered the breast of Zeke and he must get away. Brother, those were some of the emotions passing through the breast of the gambler.

In haste bred of fear he sought to "extricate the quadruped from the vehicle." (Doggone, we'll arrive some day Mabel if we adhere to the principles of delicate speech as advocated by the gentlemen of academic excellence.) Comes the time in the lives of some of us when our feet are glued to the ground by the horror of some occasion. Well then, did Mr Vidor stray so far from a condition which we all should know even if some of us are so doggone far removed we seem to circulate only in high places—of the mind?

Zeke, after killing his brother, did not serve a day in prison, aye, not even arrested. The drama teacher here discovers what he thinks is a most improbable thing. To the authorities it was only another "nigger" bumped off, and in lieu of the love which everybody knew Zeke had for his brother, with the accompanying knowledge that the shooting was accidental, why should Mr. Vidor be forced to dig up age old records to prove that such a thing has happened in the "Dear Old Southland"? Chick was of a kind that would induce many white men even in the present South to persecute a Negro being the cause of her death, for many times such as Chick can boast a white lover and her colored paramour is always in danger in such a case. Some of us, refusing to use what we have been believing is a God given trait in the possession of what we call imagination, must see elapsed time thrown on the screen so that we can better understand what the motion picture creator seeks to convey.

Taking up the cudgels in behalf of Nina Mae McKinney, we want to say to the little girl that she did exceeding fine and can readily believe us when we assert that contrary to the opinion of certain learned gentlemen, a prostitute does not necessarily have to be subtle, and what was needed of the art to make that minister lay his Bible down she possessed, and how! If it is true that all Negroes are sick and tired of being portrayed as semi-gorillas, then it is true that all theatres catering to Negroes are going to close their doors tomorrow morning. The Negro must of himself rise to portray those things on the heights of art which some of our writers are so ready to proclaim, and this writer believes that we do show some hope of getting somewhere when we are able to sit in a theatre and not become ruffled because the ruling class take advantage of those opportunities created by itself and which we sit idly by and allow to exist. Mr. Vidor has succeeded wonderfully in accomplishing that which he set out to accomplish—an evening's entertainment that anybody can enjoy, black or white.

Negro Plays Making Good

WASHINGTON, October 24.—(CNS)— Commenting upon the statements of Count Herman Keyserling, celebrated philosopher-traveler-teacher, written in the October Atlantic Monthly on "What the Negro Means to America," the New York Tribune, in an editorial "The Negro Arrives," agrees that Count Keyserling not merely as a vaudeville joke, and not merely as a highbrow cult has arrived.

The editorial reads in part:

"With "Porgy" playing its third return engagement on Broadway, "Blackbirds" just going off after playing a solid year, with "Hot Chocolates" going strong, and "Hallelujah," the first all-Negro full length motion picture turning Hollywood into a cotton field, it would seem as if the impetuous public agreed with the world philosopher.

"Hallelujah," to be sure, really contains a good deal more Hollywood than cottonland, but it means something when King Vodor turns his undoubted talent both for spactacle and for shrewd appraisement of the public taste to the colored race. It means that the Negro, not merely as a vaudeville joke, and not merely as a high brow cult, has arrived."

SPAIN WANTS OUR JAZZ MUSICIANS TO REMAIN IN FRANCE

Madrid, Spain, Oct 9.—Much apprehension exists among local musicians due to recent visits by several troops of American colored jazz bands from Paris, France, and the great popularity that they gained with the public.

As a result of the rivalry the Minister of Public Instruction and Finance was petitioned by a committee of orchestra leaders who said they represented 3,000 Spanish musicians, to take some steps to protect them against invasion by these foreign jazz bands.

Following Josephine Bakers' visit here with her colored band the craze for jazz music swept Madrid and the Spanish musicians were unable to cope with the situation

Giving Them the Laugh

TIM MOORE, Featured Comedian of Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds," Now at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, Laughed Heartily When Reminded That Some of His Friends (?) Were Surprised to Hear of His Success in the French Capital.

COLORED GIRL CAUSES BROADWAY SHOW TO CLOSE

Miss Bennett, Playing At Howard, Stopped Two-Million Dollar Show

The story of how a brown skinned girl broke up a two-million-dollar Broadway production and the true facts concerning the closing of "Lovely Lady" were revealed this week for the first time by Miss Elouise Bennett, pretty singer at the Howard Theatre, this week.

Miss Bennett is one of the stars at the Howard this week, and in an interview with a Tribune reporter told him why the show was closed after six weeks on Broadway playing to capacity crowds.

French Maid

Miss Bennett played the part of a French maid to the leading lady, Miss Edna Leedam. She did not have a big part, but had lines with the leading man and lady, besides singing a number in front of the chorus. The cast consisted of 110.

When Miss Bennett sang her number she always stopped the show. The leading man who followed her became peeved as the audience hissed him off, howling for Miss Bennett.

Fired

She received two weeks notice and when she inquired the reason for being discharged she was told that a white girl had a five-year contract with the company and would take Miss Bennett's part. The white girl tried to play the part of a colored girl. It was such a failure that she was hissed off the stage. The leading lady refused to go on with the girl in the cast and quit. Equity tried to smooth matters over, but things went from bad to worse until the show closed. Miss Leedam married a millionaire. The promoters tried to find Miss Bennett and induce her to take her former part, but she had gone to visit a friend in Pittsburgh and could not be located at the time.

"Lovely Lady" was a Shubert production and played at the Sam Harris Theatre, Broadway and Forty-second street.

At the time the show was closed the white press gave the impression that a controversy with the wardrobe mistress was the cause.

Great Day' Is Success From Critic's View

Miller and Lyles Are in the Cast

"GREAT DAY," musical comedy, by Vincent Youmans, presented by Vincent Youmans last night at the Cosmopolitan theater.

THE CAST

Pete ..... Frank Daley
Tom ..... Ken Pulsifer
Richard ..... Bob Burton
Ida May ..... Letha Burson
Kitty ..... Blanche Le Clair
Carolyn ..... Kitty Coleman
Phil Randolph ..... Billy Taylor
Susie Totheridge ..... Ethel Norris
Emmy Lou Randolph ..... Mayo Methot
Henry White and Babe Jackson .....
..... Miller and Lyles
Pepita Padilla ..... Canessi
Carlos Zarega ..... John Haynes
Jim Brent .....
Judge Totheridge .....
Mazie Brown ..... Maude Eburne
Charlie ..... Vincent Simonin
Lantern Man ..... Hugh Chilvers
Lijah ..... Lois Deppe
Show Girls: Georgia English, Loretta Kent, Diane Goering, Emily Martin, Marjorie Porter, Doris Delgar, Louise Gay.
Dancing Girls: Mediums—Margaret Miller, Beth Meredith, Irene Evans, Vera Villon, Grace Connelly, Dixie Lester, Frances Steven, Josephine Mostler, Peggy Deighton, Helen Newton, Jackie Cortez, Adelaide [illegible], Warren, Billy Toy, Rudy Lavon, Jean Joyce, Rita Garcia, May Brenton, Pauline Wynter, Olga Fox, Mildred Schroder.

New York, Oct. 25. — Ever since last April, Vincent Youman's "Great Day" has been coming over the hill, and it finally arrived last night at the Cosmopolitan theater, where, if worth can be made to spell success, it ought to remain until April comes again.

For, having seen it, it is hard to understand why it was that its opening was so often and so long postponed. Lesser shows have since then made their bid for fame, and some have even achieved it. As it now is, there remains no sign of the tinkering and the changes and the long, laborious decisions, which have produced a musical comedy, really an operetta, in which these things stand out:

A musical score, the work of Mr. Youmans, that is as lovely and complete as any that has come this year, and which, in "Great Day" and "Happy Because I'm in Love," really cannot find a peer in the current offerings. Those two songs alone would be enough, but to them have been added "Open Up Your Heart," "More Than You Know" and "Without a Song"—such music as used to be written when the songs were remembered though the show was gone.

Miller and Lyles

There stands out, too, the Colored jubilee singers led by Lois Deppe who sing "Great Day" and "Without a Song," two deep timbered, deep-rooted songs that are a curiously haunting blend of the regimental band and the spiritual. Last night's audience called them back again and again for, indeed, these powerful, untrained voices are such as sometimes arise from a whitewashed bethel deep in a Southern pine woods where inarticulate longings are dramatized in plaintive religious chants.

These jubilee singers were an odd twist in a show that is called a musical comedy, but much of the charm that is in "Great Day" should be credited to them and much of that credit should also go to the strong-voiced man who leads them.

There are, too, in "Great Day" those old favorites, Miller and Lyles, the Colored comedians, whose airy persiflage carries them unscratched through floods and financial accountings that would have carried other men to jail. If they and the rest be not enough, there is the leaven of a sustained and well developed theme which holds all of it together without getting in the way—as musical comedy plots are sometimes prone to do.

Finally there is the show itself, costumed with taste, staged with understanding and obviously directed with an exactness that took no count of time.

Musical comedies at their best are always tricky things and nothing can so quickly turn to an empty dream. But Mr. Youmans, surely, for all that he has tried to do and has done, deserves and should obtain the success which, if denied him now, could never be reached by merely doing more.

—W. A. U., in the New York Journal.

"Siren of the Tropics" Will Hit Broadway

Seven-Reel Feature to Be Shown Soon

New York, Oct. 25. — Jack Goldberg, managing director of Gold Talking Pictures, Inc. the producing company which recently imported Josephine Baker's seven-reel feature, "Siren of the Tropics," from France, states that he will bring this attraction to Broadway the latter part of October.

Josephine Baker has the leading role in this sound picture, which played to record audiences in Paris. The Recording Laboratories of America have just completed the synchronization of the picture in their studios. According to Goldberg, the Baker vehicle will be housed for a run in one of the legitimate Broadway theaters.

Appearing in one of the leading roles with the ebony star is Count d'Abatina, who sponsored Miss Baker's appearances at the Follies Ber-

gere and obtained the contract to her with Le Central Cinematograph ique, the producers of "Siren of th Tropics."

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Individual Troupes, etc.,

RECORDER
Indianapolis Ind.
JUL 13 1929

PERSEVERANCE

William Foster, a middle-aged Negro sports writer and journalist, motion picture playwright and former cinema producer on a small scale, has been made an assistant director in the film studio of the Pathe Company in Los Angeles. And thereby hangs a tale with an important moral to Negroes.

Mr. Foster went out to Hollywood last winter. No one seems to know how he got out there because at the time he was blessed with little of this world's goods. But he did have dogged persistence and a thorough confidencee in the worth of the Negro film dramas he had written. He said he was going to get in the moving picture game as a writer and director, and he did. He had noted the rising interest in the Negro as dramatic material in Hollywood and he decided to get right out there and get in on the ground floor.

He got out there in some manner and began to camp around the movie offices and lots. He was laughed at, scoffed at, given the run around, but he persisted. In spite of the ridicule of blacks and whites he kept coming back and demanding a hearing and a chance to show what he could do. Finally, after some disheartening rebuffs, he got a break. The vice president of Pathe became interested in him and arranged a conference with him.

Now, to make a long story short, Mr. Foster, whose pen name is Juli Jones, Jr., is an assistant director, much to the surprise of the Negroes whom he directs and the whites who observe him.

There is a lesson in this for those countless members of our group who, after expending a little effort to get ahead are ready to hoist the white flag, damn the Caucasian and admit defeat. There are so few of us who recognize the supreme importance of perseverance in getting ahead in this world. We are too ready to give up and acknowledge defeat. We don't try hard enough, forgetting that one of the cardinal principles of self-salesmanship is stick-to-itivness. There are numbers of Negroes of education training and ability, doing menial tasks who have only themselves to blame. They are the ones who have scampered off at the first two or three grow'ls or frowns instead of trying again and again. Because race prejudice is in existence is no reason for a Negro assuming that there is no way to surmount it. Nerve, grit, and persistence, are the most important factors in success.

—THE PITTSBURGH COURIER.

JULES BLEDSOE, DURING SUMMER REST PERIOD FROM "SHOW BOAT," STOPS THE SHOW AT PALACE WITH SINGING

Jules Bledsoe, baritone, who was for months one of the main attractions in Ziegfeld's "Show Boat" through his singing of the striking number, "Old Man River," was not permitted to devote the summer to rest, following the closing of "Show Boat" until fall, but was immediately called upon to appear at the Palace as a headliner on the vaudeville bill.

Mr. Bledsoe sang a group of songs, with Justin Sandridge at the piano, and "stopped the show" with the magic of his voice. The theatrical weekly, "Billboard," in its issue of July 13, published the following review of the colored singer's act:

JULES BLEDSOE
Assisted at the piano by Justin Sandridge
Reviewed at the Palace. Style—Singing. Setting—In one. Time—Nineteen minutes.

Bledsoe is the eminent Negro baritone under contract to Ziegfeld and a late feature of Show Boat. He also recorded the prologue of the Universal film of that name. Besides these most recent contributions toward attaining a "name" rating, Bledsoe has appeared with success on the concert stage. His is a rich, thoroughly appealing delivery. He has the typical mellowness of a top-grade baritone and a complete stock of the tidbits in the lower registers to achieve the basis of that appeal upon which rests the wherefore of a basso.

On entrance here they gave him a big ovation. Without the usual gesticulatory blah he did "The Song of the Volga Boatmen" It would have been difficult to choose a better item as a vaudeville opener. Followed with "Danny Boy", which brough out clearly his technical mastery of the liquid baritonic tones His interpretation in the original Yiddish and Hebrew of "Eli Eli" threw the house into a white heat of appreciation. With Molly Picon here on her second week, as his billmate, Bledsoe smashed right at the heart of the Picon-drawn audience with this choice. For an encore he gave "Ol Man River," apparently minded to avoid his erstwhile production connection unless the issue was forced on him, as at this viewing. Stopped the show again, but begged off.

Bledsoe is a corking act for the better houses. Might be put down as a class draw based on racial interest. His pipes are the darbs, but the boy has much to learn in the other essentials, though his powerful delivery might make all other points trifling by comparison. But the fact remains that Bledsoe is unintelligible and, by this token, unimpressive in announcements, poorly stanced while warblnig and not at all at ease in his ill-fitting dress suit. We have observed such factors to be fixed up before in artists of lesser brillance. There's hope for Bledsoe. Sandridge furnishes pleasing accompaniment.

E. E. S.

Our Actors Are No Different Than Whites; Use Burnt Cork

New York.—Just why Negro comedians apply burnt cork when, as a general rule, their faces are only one shade lighter than lampblack, has long puzzled layman and wise guy alike The reason, in case the busy reader doesn't wish to go further into this subject, is because the Negro actor and the white actor think alike.

It is all a matter of habit. The Caucasian thespian, if he is a comedian, goes in for fancy reds and blues and white eyebrows—the Colored comedian always dips into his can of burnt cork.

Many have asked why the Negro doesn't paint his face red, or resort to the makeups of old-line comedians. The psychology back of this burnt cork procedure is simply that the Negro is basically a minstrel performer. His mind runs along the same channel as used to run the famous minstrels our grandfathers applauded. He must accentuate his color or he isn't happy.

The Negro is no different in his inhibitions than the white actor, excepting that he is always a minstrel and the minstrel always makes his face blacker than it could possibly be normally. No matter how Zululike a Colored comedian's countenance you'll always find him resorting to burnt cork.

He is not an imitator, as is generally believed. He is conscious that minstrelsy is his own property and that the whites have taken away something that is his by imitating his drolleries, his color and his articulation.

Billy Higgins of "Hot Chocolate" is remembered chiefly for his grotesque gestures—negroid in every movement. Billy Maxey of the same show depends slightly on exaggerated costumes, shepherd plaids and funny hats. But who can say that this doesn't belong to his race? Aren't Colored males fashion plates in their own way and isn't the first rule of being funny elaboration of the truth?

"Jazzlips" Richardson of the show at the Hudson is a dancer, but at one time he was branded as a comedian and ever since he has been using cork. He could apply white grease paint to his lips and save quite a tidy sum on the season, but he would no more think of this than he would of working without a slouch hat that he claims has brought him luck through the lean years.

Eddie Green, author of the sketches in "Hot Chocolates," is another comedian who wouldn't think of stepping upon the stage unless blacked up. Like the other Negro funmaker he tries to become blacker as his sister actresses try to become whiter.

When it comes to arguing about dressing rooms, electric signs and program billing you'll find the Negro is exactly like the white actor. Because it has been the custom to argue about these things it will always be the rule. And because it has been the custom for Negro clowns to put on burnt cork nothing is likely to ever change it.—New York Morning Telegram.

Walter Richardson Leaves for Australia; Other News From Across the Briny Deep

By IVAN H. BROWNING

LONDON, England, June 13.—Mr. and Mrs. Walter Richardson were at the opera "Norma" at the great Covent Garden Friday evening. Mrs. Richardson wore a Parisian creatnon of flowered chiffon on a pale pink background which was very becoming to her pretty brown skin color.

The dres was of the fashion now being worn with tight fitting bodice and flounces reaching to the heel of her dainty spangled slippers of green crepe de chine. Over this model was her black and white evening wrap. Glittering around her neck was the lovely and rare wedding present from her husband, a pearl and diamond necklace with seven half moons and a star in the center of each moon of pearls and in the center of each star a resplendent diamond. They were a magnificent couple and made a splendid showing of the real modern Negro.

Mr. and Mrs. Richardson leave London June 14 for Australia for one year and wish to say good-by to all their friends, both in America and on this side. Going by way of the Suez canal they anticipate a lovely trip. Mrs. Richardson will write of her six weeks on the ocean in our Race papers, so all of their friends can enjoy the trip with them. Here's wishing them a lovely bon voyage, much success and happiness.

The popular Walter will appear in Sidney with the Australia company of "Showboat" and the Williamson producers have signed him to one of the finest contracts I have seen in a long time. He is booked for a year with an option. Mr. Richardson was a tremendous success in Virginia in the London West end and I am sure he will easily duplicate his London success in far-away Australia. All mail will reach the Richardsons at the American Express, Sidney Australia.

Coleridge Taylor's "Hiawatha" is being presented in London at Albert hall by the Royal School society and is being directed by the great English conductor, Dr. Malcolm Sergent. There are 800 in the chorus and a ballet of 200. It is a grand sight and privilege to be able to attend and listen to the wonderful music by the greatest of all Negro composers, Coleridge-Taylor, who was indeed one of the world's greatest composers, and his memory will live forever in England and each year "Hiawatha" is given on a grand scale and, of course, is always a tremendous success in every way.

Prof. Louie Drysdale and John C. Payne Esq. are making final preparations and will leave next month for Vienna, where both will study for eight weeks with one of the old German masters. Mr. Payne will be greatly missed in London by his many friends.

A big first night is expected at the Court theater Monday evening when the popular actor, Frank Wilson Esq., late of "Porgy," opens in "All God's Chillun Got Wings."

Charming Mrs. Emma Layton is often seen here and there in her beautiful new car. Mrs. Layton is often mistaken for a noted East Indian princess who is living in London at this time.

Caska Bonds Esq., popular vocal teacher of New York, is visiting in London, where he will spend a month with old friends. Mr. Bonds, having lived in England for many years, is well known on this side. He was the guest Saturday evening at the Layton home and spent a most delightful time with Mrs. Emma Layton and the Procters. Sunday he spent the afternoon and evening at the home of John C. Payne, where he met several of his old friends. I have known Prof. Bonds, as he is often called in New York, and regardless of his having lived in New York for years, he is as typically English as ever and always interesting. It is most extraordinary and a pleasure to know a born American Negro like Mr. Bonds, for after all his mannerisms are quite natural and he is very charming indeed. After a fortnight more in London he leaves for Paris to remain a short time before going to Vienna, where he will study for six weeks.

Reginald Foresythe, a very clever English born Negro pianist and accompanist, is sailing next week on the S. S. Maldavia for Australia with Mr. and Mrs. Walter Richardson. Mr. Foresythe will accompany Mr. Richardson during his concerts and private party work. The popular Walter has a number of such engagements already booked for periods when he is not appearing in "Showboat."

Countee Cullen, noted poet, after several months' stay in England, left a few days ago for Paris, where he will spend the rest of the summer before sailing for America. Mr. Cullen had a delightful time in London and of course between writing and lecturing he managed to take in many of the interesting sights in and around England.

Miss Rebal Callender of New York who is traveling with the popular Miss Dorothy Gish, famous movie star, is visiting in London. Miss Callender is having a jolly good time among her many friends in London.

Mrs. Sam Patterson of New York has arrived in London and is busy taking in the sights. Mrs. Patterson is enjoying her visit very much.

Paul Robeson is singing this weekend at the big pavilion at the beautiful summer resort, Blackpool.

Layton and Johnstone are a tremendous hit at the big Palladium Ox-ford circus, where they will remain a fortnight.

Popular Mrs. Edna Thomas and a number of the "Porgy" members, enjoyed their short stay in Paris before sailing for America.

Russell and Vivian are in Paris and open at the Kit Kat club in the gay city for a fortnight.

T. Elder Hearns' latest revue, "Good Gracious," headed by the popular Eddie Hunter, is at the Empire in Liverpool. Other Americans featured in the revue are Miss Elizabeth Smith, Young Snowball, Sleepy Harris, Willie Williams and Norman Astwood. The revue is a big success.

The Four Harmony Kings have started their variety road show well, breaking records in the provinces, and are booked up already to the end of September.

NEGRO FAD IS GOOD FOR THE DUSKY ACTOR BOTH ON AND OFF BROADWAY

Eagerness to Read What the Critics Say Has Caused a Boom in Education—Eddie Green Has Wonderful Library—Louise Cook Writing Book.

NEW YORK CITY, Dec. 12.—(C. N. S.)—There is a legend around the Hudson Theater that the morning after "Hot Chocolate" opened last June, "Jazz Lips" Richardson, who had been acclaimed to the skies, remarked that he didn't think that the reviews were very good. "They didn't say a word about me," he added.

When informed that he "hooged" the comments, he is said to have broken down and wept to the point of confessing that he coud neither read nor write. His reason for mentioning the criticism, it is said, was wholly to get somebody to read them to him.

Now there is a grain of truth in the ignorance; that is the lack of school learning of the American Negro actor. His inability to read or write isn't quite as bad as rumored but the point at hand is that all this praise of the colored man is doing for him what the writing men have overlooked. It is making him take himself seriously, and it is forcing him into acquiring an education.

They're Hiring Tutors.

Count Keyserling in "The Atlantic Monthly" for October and The Herald Tribune of October 18, in an editorial, are two instances at hand that have caused at least one Negro troupe (Hot Chocolates) to hire tutors. Count Keyserling goes on to say that "The American Negro is a purely American type, and much more convincing as such than any living American type." His puff, followed up by the editorial, "The Negro Arrives," jolted Harlem into a realization that a little brain food added to the natural creativeness of the colored race isn't at all a bad idea.

Those who witnessed early performances of "Hot Chocolates" and those of recent date will notice that schooling has gripped more than one of the cast. "What was you doing on 135th street?" is now "What were you——"

There will be some who will argue that a little education may spoil the performances of the dusky actor. It hasn't so far. Louise Cook, for instance, is at the moment writing a history of the Oriental dance and there are none to say she has lost a single wiggle by going literary.

Eddie Green, the comedian, hasn't lost any of his Negroid drollery by taking up the technicalities of the radio, operating a private station at the Hudson. Since last June he has bought one of the finest private libraries in Harlem.

If anything, he is funnier than before the intelligentsia took up his race. The colored chorine is studying French and German. One of the lassies laughingly told an interviewer that she also thought of taking up English because she had heard the show would play in London.

Public taste leaning, as it does at the moment, for the Negro revue and the Harlem night club, is doing for the Negro more than all the old-time vaudeville jokes. The highbrow cult is pointing the way. If anyone doubts this, he should stand backstage at "Hot Chocolates" and hear the reprimands of the stage manager and the leader of the orchestra.

Theatrical -1929

Individual Troupes, etc.

South Carolina Mumbles Over 'Potee's Gal'--New Play

COLUMBIA, S. C.—(Exclusive)—Dr. E. C. L. Adams, white, physician, who has given up the practice of medicine to devote all his time and energy to the writing of Negro folk plays, has started something with his new play "Potee's Gal", now rehearsing at the Little Theatre here.

Adams first received international comment with his "Congaree Sketches," stories of the Congaree Swamps, which many believe compare favorably with Chandler Harris' stories of "Uncle Remus."

Adams and his director, William Dean, white, Englishman, son of a West African trading merchant, and born in Liverpool, have had difficulties not only in assembling the cast but in overcoming the adverse comment of white and colored people.

Dean has been associated various times with the Cohens, the Shuberts, Erlanger and the Selwyns. At present he is professor of dramatic art at the University of South Carolina and director of the staff: of the Columbia Stage Society.

There has been the objection of certain whites to the use of a colored play with a colored cast in the program of plays sponsored by the society.

From some of the colored people have come unfavorable comment because of the free use of the word "nigger," and because there is a feeling that the play shows the Negro in a comic light.

The story is supposed to represent a faithful picture of the life of Negroes who live in this section of the South. The background of the play is the Congaree Swamps, just a few miles from Columbia. Congaree is not only the name of the swamp but the name of the river which comes down to the present date from the Indians who used to inhabit this region and who have left vestiges of their race in the colored population of this section.

Beside "Congaree Sketches," Adams has written "Nigger to Nigger." He sees, in this play, a chance to produce a Paul Robeson or Florence Mills from local talent. Author and director have the greatest hope for its appearance on Broadway and the European stage.

T. O. B. A. ANGLES FOR EASTERN THEATRE

Need House To Break Long Jump From New York To Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh

ROUTINGS ANNOUNCED

Say Whitman Sisters To Return To Wheel

Age-American

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. —The following announcement from the office of the General Manager of the Circuit, Sam E. Reevin gives rise to the general feeling on the [illegible] traveling over the circuit that, consecutive [illegible] are now a fealty.

After New Eastern House

The announcement contains a list of the shows and houses booked for the week of January 14, 129. The bookings as listed follow: "Twenty Dark Spots of Joy," Apollo theatre, Chicago, Ill. (This is the second of the wheel attractions to play the new Chicago home of Toby attractions). "Shake Your eet Co." Elmore theatre, Pittsburgh, Pa.; Drake-Walker Co., Globe theatre, Cleveland, Ohio; "Brownskin Models," Pythian theatre, Columbus, Ohio; Williams and Brown's "Happy Go Luck Co.", Palace theatre, Dayton, Ohio; "Miss Creola Co.", Walker theatre, Indianapolis, Ind.; Byrd and Lockhart Co., Lincoln theatre, Louisville, Ky.; "Golden Brownskin Peaches," Koppin theatre, Detroit, Mich.; "Plantation Days," Roosevelt theatre, Cincinnati, Ohio; "Mandy Green," Booker Washington theatre, St. Louis, Mo.; "Hot Ella Co.", Liberty theatre, Chattanooga, Tenn.; "Dominoes of 1929," Bijou theatre, Nashville, Tenn.; "Miss Broadway," Palace theatre, Memphis, Tenn.; "Sugar Cane," Star theatre, Shreveport, La.; "Chicago Steppers," Washington theatre, Houston, Texas; "Harlem to Dixie," Dauphene theatre, New Orleans, La.; "Dusky Maids," Pike theatre, Mobile, Ala.; "Birth of the Blues," Frolic theatre, Birmingham, Ala.; "Radio Sam, Melody Man," 81 theatre, Atlanta, Ga.; "St. Louis Follies," Douglas theatre, Macon, Ga.; "Bandana Days," dividing the week between the Eagle and Palace theatres, Asheville and Greensboro, N. C.; "Miss Inez," Grand theatre, Baton Rouge, La., and "Syncopated Sue," Lincoln theatre, Winston Salem, N. C. All the above houses and managers of the shows have contracts for booking in advance for from 3 to 12 weeks.

It is also announced that negotiations are under way for a prominent house in the east to soon become a link in the T. O. B. A. chain, which will break the jump between New York and Pittsburgh. It is thought by officials of the organization, that this house will be in line in the next three weeks. The Whitman Sisters and their "gang" will be among the now well organized group of "Toby" attractions in the next three or four weeks. With the annexation of the house mentioned, the link up through the east to the middle west will be complete and the outlook for the year 1929 is better by far than has been the case for some time back.

Producers Displeased Over Indiscreet Acts Of Photoplay Players

Pittsburgh Courier

Pittsburgh, Pa.

2/16/29

GILPIN CASE IS CITED AS AN EXAMPLE

LOS ANGELES, Cal., Feb. 14.—(By Harry Leavette, Staff Correspondent A. N. P.)—Quarrels, fights and bad habits are jeopardizing the future of colored actors in the motion picture industry, if the word of directors and others who have had occasion to work with and to contact the colored performers since their recent induction in such large numbers in important pictures became a fact.

"If the motion picture industry is in such a condition that it will not tolerate expense-making temperament on the part of the most famous white actors and actresses, what do you think the disposition toward the Negro actor will be?" one director was heard to inquire.

While residents of Los Angeles who have swelled with racial pride at the sight of the entrance of the Negro into the cinema world, are now holding their breath lest something dire should happen in the record of those who have been chosen, directors are threatening to dismiss some of the leading colored performers.

Trouble Started With Gilpin

Universal seems to have already had more than its share of difficulties, both with a recognized colored star and with lesser performers, recruited from the local citizenry. Charles Gilpin was summarily fired by Universal two years ago for coming on the set an hour late and, according to allegations then made, drunk. The delay occasioned by Gilpin's tardiness cost the company thousands of dollars. Bishop Scott and a party of prominent persons who had come as guests of the company to watch the taking of the picture were forced to go away disappointed. Edmund Lowe was afterwards employed to take Gilpin's place in this picture, "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

When "Hearts of Dixie" was planned, the Fox company decided to give Mr. Gilpin another chance. He was in New York at the time, but the company sent for him and offered him $1,200 a week to work. Gilpin came, but, according to other colored performers in the cast, Gilpin soon began to show signs of carelessness and crankiness. Director Sloane reproved Gilpin, being forced to admonish at one time in substantially the following words:

"Mr. Gilpin, we will not tolerate temperament out of anyone. We are paying you for a picture, so you'll have to give us a picture and nothing else."

Shortly afterwards, Gilpin was released. George Reed, a local favorite, was given the part, but failed to click. Now it is being done by Clarence Muse.

Actors Quarrel and Fight

A quarrel which began on the studio lot during the filming of the same picture and ended in a free-for-all fight in the lobby of the Somerville hotel, took place when "Stompy" and "Stopin Fetchit," local comedians, took issue with each other over a "Stepin Fetchit," local comedians, per week, is reported to have hired a gangster to beat up his erstwhile friend, "Stompy." When "Stepin," "Stompy," the gangster, and others reached the lobby of the Somerville, a three-cornered fracas ensued in which bottles and cans were thrown.

Again during the making of this same picture, another troublesome incident happened to increase the uneasiness of the patient directors. A girl and a man, each employed at $100 a week, were playing opposite each other in their first big movietone job. They had to be frequently reprimanded because their interest in each other was greater than their interest in the picture. The girl was capricious where the rest of the cast was concerned and the man was jealous. There came the time for the filming of a wedding scene in which she was to be his bride, and the guests were to crowd forward and kiss her.

At the first rehearsal, the director told the extras to pretend. But when ready for the camera, he said, "Now make it real and do it well." An extra, named Williams began to make his part of the scene very realistic, indeed, when the lover, playing the groom, yelled out angrily, with an epithet, "———, don't hold that girl so long."

This itself was a serious offense as talking during important scenes is prohibited, but when the girl began scornfully to turn her cheek to the other wedding guests, the directors were forced to stop all action and rebuke both performers. The girl started crying and all further work for the day had to be called off.

Buy Up Plenty of Cars

A grand rush to the auto sales rooms was the first evidence that actors, formerly getting $7.50 a day as extras, had come into affluence at from $100 to $500 a week. Many sought cars who had no place to keep them, and one ritzy gentleman has ruined himself with the company that made his car possible by tearing through the studio grounds at breakneck speed. Another "Stepin Fetchit," has bought three new cars in two months. He still has two of them and has employed a chauffeur. The cars are a Cadillac limousine, a Cadillac sport model phaeton and a roadster.

Investigation fails to show that any of the fortunate actors have invested any money in substantial securities or property.

RACE HERO BY WHITE

IN OPERA ROLE—WHITE MAN TO SING HERO'S PART IN MAKEUP AMERICANS AFRAID

New York, Jan. 6, 1929.—In the European productions of Ernst Krenek's jazz opera, "Jonny Spielt Auf," which is to have its American premiere at the Metropolitan, Jan. 9, Jonny, the hero, was a colored jazz band leader in love with a white opera singer.

Guardian

In the Metropolitan production, it was learned today, Jonny is to be a white man in black-make-up—a sort of operatic blackface comedian. The libretto also has been expurgated somewhat, it was said, for the American audience.

12-15-28

Boston, Mass.

Translations of the title, "Jonny Spielt Auf," vary. For the Metropolitan programmes it has been translated into "Johnny Strikes Up the Band." The French called it "Johnny Leads the Dance." Another version is "Johnny Jazzes It Up."

The climax of the opera comes at the end when Jonny, perched atop a huge revolving clock in a railroad station, invites the whole world to dance the Charleston to the music of his jazz band.

Dancer Compiles Amusement Guide

Billings Gazette

4-7-29

Down Broadway

"BLACKBIRDS," (ninth month), ELTINGE THEATRE. Featuring Adelaide Hall, Bill Robinson, Aida Ward, Tim Moore, world famous Blackbirds' Orchestra and Johnny Hudgins.

"SHOW BOAT," (one year), ZIEGFELD THEATRE. Thirty colored performers in a cast of more than one hundred, featuring Jules Bledsoe.

Deep Harlem

LAFAYETTE (sound pictures), MILLER and LYLES (musical), with the Harmony Trio, Revella Hughes, Margaret Sims, Mae Barnes, Lavenia Mack, Fats Waller, Jimmie Johnson, Arthur Porter and chorus.

LINCOLN (sound pictures), "DEEP HARLEM" (musical), with Whitney and Tutt, Chappel and Stinnett, John Mason, Pearl McCormach and 50 singing and dancing maidens.

ALHAMBRA (triple programme), "MARKET DAY" (musical), with Billy Higgins, Johnny Lee Long, Isabel Washington, Manda Randolph, Jimmie Baskette, Doris Rheubottom, Pigmeat, 16—Famous Alhambra Girls—16.

ALHAMBRA, "THE RED CIRCLE" (drama), with Andrew Bishop, George Randol, Sussie Sutton, Edna Barr, Barrington Carter, Ted Blackburne and Artie Cain.

Nite Clubs

COTTON CLUB—Dan Healy's revue, with Aletha Hill, Berry Bros., Margaret Beckett, Duke Elligton and his Washingtonians.

SMALL'S PARADISE—Leonard Harper's revue, with Joyce and Rookie, St. Clair Dotson's trio and Johnny Johnson's orchestra.

CONNIE'S INN — Leonard Harper's revue, with Merres and Merres, Madeline Bell, Louise Coke, Mordecai and Elmore, Baby Cox and Leroy Smith's orchestra.

CLUB HARLEM — Frank Montgomery's revue.

LENOX CLUB—Louis Cole.

UNFAIR MANAGERS AND OWNERS OF THEATRES ARE KILLING SHOW BUSINESS, IS COMPLAINT MADE

Pay No Premium for Ability; Losses for Season on Poor Shows Made Up by Cutting Prices Paid Good Shows

PHILADELPHIA.—"What," I asked Miss Mabel Whitman, "is the matter with the show business?"

Did I touch a bomb under this dynamic woman producer and pioneer of the stage game? Emphatically, Yes.

Sister Mae is in her seventh week of the current season at John T. Gibson's playhouses in the Quaker City. Now, seven weeks for a big company uptown is a unique thing and when a colored show can still draw after that elapsed period, it is almost a miracle. It proves that the theatre owner has vision and the troup has class and crowd-appeal.

"What is wrong with the show business" she checked back at me. "You have come to the right person. I know the answer.

"The trouble with this game is a set of unscrupulous owners and managers who seemingly have syndicated themselves together to stifle progress along the lines of art and entertainment. They feel that any kind of show is good enough for a colored audience and their only desire is to have a comedian and a few half-naked girls on hand to keep the doors open.

"They insult the intelligence, prey on the necessity, of Negro patrons. They sense that the people must have some place to go for amusement; instead of giving them the best talent possible, they palm off the worst as long as they can.

"When the crowd gets fed up on that sort of diet, they try to book a good show and try to get it for the same money they pay an amateur company which was made up overnight. This is what a certain owner told me, and I'll name him when and if necessary— I have been losing money all year and I have to get out of the red on your engagement here. Therefore, I won't pay you what you want.

"You have a family company. You don't need money because you all work and live together. Come in at my price or stay out."

"Well, I stayed out, I am staying out and never in life will play for a man who tells me [illegible] foot the losses he has suffered from bum shows.

"Let me give you some figures in this perticular case. Years ago, when I had a smaller show he refused to pay me a guarantee of $1400. I went in on a percentage and took away $2700 for my end of the receipts. The last time we played his house my cut for the week was $3750. Then, when he tried to get me this fall ,he offered me a guarantee of $1600 instead of the usual percentage and explained himself by saying that I, Mae Whitman, had to make up for the bad weeks other people had given him.

"He offered me $1600 for a company of 30 people. He offered me $1600 and it would have cost me $490 in railroad fare, exclusive of baggage transportation, to get there. Excuse me if I am not as calm as usual)

"What encouragement does a producer get out of that sort of stuff? How can you improve and develop your shows and people if there is no more money available for a good show than for a misfit outfit?

"This is what an owner did here in Philadelphia. He went to the individual members of a show in his house and asked them what their salary was, offering as an excuse that he was about to produce a show and wanted to use them in it. At the end of the week he paid off the performers himself and paid the producer a musician's salary!

"What does 'Mabel Whitman' mean to men of that type? Does my name stand for anything with them? For no more than Mabel Jack Rabbit!

With them it is an insolent 'What are you going to do about it? Take it or leave it.

"Well, I am one producer who can leave it!'

"If these birds pay you a living wage they want you to guarantee that it will not rain or snow during the week you are booked with them. Something must be done and that, quickly.

'But there is another picture, a bright and cheerful one. All owners are not in that category. In this game there are men who appreciate your work and your worth. They will either pay you what you ask or not book you at all until they feel that they can do so. And they will pay you the same money or percentage for return engagements. They try to give their patrons pleasing entertainment and you always work harder for such managers. Believe me, twenty years' experience by Mae Whitman means something to them.

"In the west, Pittsburgh, Newark, New York, Atlantic City and here in Philadelphia are owners who will always give us enough time to make out a season. They don't do it out of sympathy, they don't do it out of charity.

"True, they are our friends. But they realize that we own more scenery and more costumes than any similar organization, thus reducing the house overhead. They know we are money-makers. They appreciate these things. That's why, in the course of a season, we play from two to eight weeks with Mr. Bibson and other high-class theatrical men. Indeed, I spend so much time in Philadelphia that it is a second home for me.

"And now do you know what is the matter with the show business?"

MISS MABEL WHITMAN

Owner and producer of Celebrated Whitman Sisters Show.

Story Of "Blackbirds" Success Reads Like Modern Fairy Tale

1/5/29

NEW YORK, Jan. 3.—"Blackbirds of 1928," colored revue, sponsored by Lew Leslie, found itself in the unenviable plight the day following its premiere at the Liberty Theatre on May 9 last of being critically blackballed. The reviews, with two notable exceptions, were uniformly bad. And inasmuch as Mr. Leslie had produced this extravaganza in order to recoup a terrific monetary loss sustained in an endeavor to popularize a night club known as Des Ambassadeurs, where the highlights of this folderol were pleasant features, the blow made the unusually imperturbably producer wince.

All he heard that day was: "Too bad, Lew. Sorry to hear you have a flop."

Lew Leslie, however, was far from disheartened. It might be a flop to the critics, he confided, but his experience as a showman convinced him he had a popular entertainment —a show the public would buy. Several things had gone wrong the opening night and he set about adjusting these with celerity. An error in judgment—something, by the way, that retarded much quicker success in his opinion—brought the now famous "Porgy" satire in the opening spot of the second act instead of the closing spot of the first act, as it now stands. This number, which makes for one of the most talked of finales in New York died the opening night because it had been spotted wrong—something for which Lew Leslie has not yet forgiven himself because he had followed the advice of friends in this move against his own judgment.

None the less the damage was done and Lew Leslie began rebuilding his show.

"What's the use?" pleaded his closest friends. "The critics killed you. You can't build a show on Broadway any more. The competition is too keen. They either like your show or they don't like it. And besides, you have no money to fight."

And, indeed, he hadn't. But that was no deterrent to Lew Leslie. If he had no money he at least knew where his credit was good. So he set about assiduously to see what was wrong with "Blackbirds." And, strangely enough, outside of two weak comedy scenes, the extravaganza looked perfect to him. He tested out five new laugh skits before he found the two he wanted and quickly incorporated these in the revue. In the meanwhile, realizing that the success of a colored show depends on its pep, zip and dash, he ordered daily rehearsals and kept the chorus girls going at a pace that was reflected in the speed of all future performances.

The extravaganza, despite Leslie's unflagging work and inexhaustible spirit of confidence, failed to bring signs of box office encouragement during the first five weeks of its run. And while the weekly intake did not recede, neither did it advance, which is as good as saying in show business that the play evidences no sign of life. Even more ominous was the distressing fact that not only were the losses mounting, but Leslie faced a situation fraught with graver peril. The coffers of his friends were closed to further borrowings and he was importuned by those who had his best interests at heart to quit the unequal struggle. Again Leslie demurred, gritted his teeth and carried on.

The magic of word to mouth advertising worked at a snail's pace in this case. Playgoers, what there were of them, liked the show to such an extent that a majority broadcast the good news in the form of "raves" and still the business remained only so-so. The most encouraging sign, however, soon reared its welcome head in the form of a song, "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby," which was beginning to be sung everywhere. Right here the tide turned in favor of Lew Leslie and his "Blackbirds." Business grew apace, and when the tenth week was reached it had leaped to capacity, where it has remained ever since.

"Blackbirds," as the business began climbing, naturally limped a row at a time out of the cut-rate agency, where once your seats are incarcerated—or so, at any rate, the story goes—they can never get out again. Finally the tickets disappeared from Leblang's completely, a feat accomplished in recent years most notably by "Abie's Irish Rose."

It might be well to record in this biography of a failure that was turned into a hit that Lew Leslie has not only recouped whatever losses he sustained early in the run of "Blackbirds," but has eked out sufficient to form a second company, which is now playing in Boston, a fact worth retailing not so much to relate how much money he has earned, but because never in the history of the show business has a producer organized a second company to present a revue in exact replica of one current on Broadway. Which ought to be about enough proof that "Blackbirds" is one of the sturdiest hits in town.

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Troupes, etc.,

Closing of Show Trying Broadway Run Another Blow at Unorganized Actors

Amsterdam News.
11-13-29 New York, N.Y.

Production's Press Representative Calls It a Rotten Situation, One of Most Disgraceful Episodes in Theatrical Circles

SAYS NEGROES SHOULD GET TOGETHER

People Said to Have Rehearsed Seven Weeks, With the Hope of "Arriving" on Broadway the Only Compensation

"Make Me Know It," the drama of colored life by D. Frank Marcus closed suddenly Wednesday night at Wallack's Theatre, it is reported by C, F. Stevens, former press agent for the producer, when David Verschleiser sole backer of the production, failed to put in an appearance during the evening, and thus left the play and cast stranded.

The cast of about 40 colored players, most of whom had rehearsed for seven weeks or more without pay, it is alleged, were not paid off nor had any provision been made up till Saturday of last week to meet their just claims. In some cases, it is said, members of the cast had drawn various small sums of money in advance from the company manager, and thus did not have a full salary due them.

It is reported that some members of the company to whom salary wa have applied to the city's Legal Aid Department for assistance.

All of the players held signed contracts, under which they are said to be entitled to two weeks' salary on notice.

It is declared that when Verschleiser failed to apepar Wednesday night, various sums of money were owing by him to the Chanins, owners of Wallack's, to the stage hands, to the printers, sign men, musicians, bill poster, and to the author and press representative, the last a salaried employee. At least two have already commenced actions at law to recover the sums alleged to be due them from Verschleiser.

In other words, the whole business ended up in one of those terrible situations when one man's incapacity, or worse, brings severe damage upon a large number of people who had confidence in that man.

"It is a rotten situation and the whole episode is disgraceful," said Mr. Stevens yesterday to a representative of this paper, "and it ought not to be allowed to die without something tangible being done about it. And I have no reference to the $80(claim for salary and expenses which I personally hold against this man. This is in competent legal hands, and will probably be recovered in due course. I am not very much concerned about that item.

"But my blood boils when I think of those seven weeks of hard, uncompensated labor that cast put into the producer's hands for his potential profit, only to have him pull that old walk-out stuff that has cursed the theatre all its life. Here are some thirty or more hard-working players who, out of eight weeks' time drew pay for only the one try-out week at New Rochelle and New Haven, and in most cases are left to whistle and fight for the few dollars due them for the four New York performances.

"Many of those players didn't have five cents to their names when the shocking news of the backer's disappearance was conveyed to them when they rang down Wednesday night. I myself gave carfare to two of them who would have had to walk from 42d street to Harlem if somebody hadn't chipped in.

"Of course, this is a too often repeated story in the theatre. Putting on a play seems to attract a regular succession of fly-by-night pirates who haven't an ounce of shame in them. But among our white players they erected the Actors Equity Association for protection against just such horrible injustices. And that association, by requiring bonds for salary and for transportation, has just about knocked the gyp producers out of the business.

"But the Negro actor and actress apparently has no defense whatever, and as a white man who wants to be decent and fair to everyone regardless of color, race or sect, I think it is a rotten shame. It is an outrage when thirty or more colored people, badly in need of every penny they can earn, as a rule, can be worked for eight weeks and paid for one week, as most of the cast of "Make Me Know It!" were.

"Apparently, some people are utterly unaffected by what they do, and don't care what damage or suffering they cause other people, even those who had confidence in them, because I am told that on Thursday night, the first night following this disgraceful debacle, Verschleiser calmly attended the performance at the Mansfield Theatre. Nothwithstanding, incidentally, a story was passed out over the phone at his office in the Central Opera House on East 67th street, that "he was out of town for ten days by his doctor's orders." And the same answer was given to a reporter for the New York Times, that he was "out of town."

"Something ought to be done to bring about a protective organization to help the Negro actor in these matters of free rehearsal time and salary bonds. I personally am not well enough informed to know just what can be done, but there is in the whole situation of the Negro actor a striking condition of injustice that cries for correction. And if it turns out that for various reasons, nothing can be done to adequately safeguard him then I advise that they turn their backs on the industry that so badly misuses them. Let them go and get a regular job in some business or other where they will be reasonably sure that they will get paid on Saturday, and where no one would think for a moment of such a preposterous thing as six, seven or eight weeks of uncompensated labor."

Midnight Shows Open Broadway Stages And Fame To Negro Actors

Journal
10-26-29
Dunbar

A List of Those Who Have Made Harlem Cabarets and Revues Their Sesame Is A Roll Call of Famous Stage Names

NEW YORK, N. Y.—The Negro walks in where the Caucasin can't, and for him it is just as well, because otherwise his opportunity for exhibiting his talents to Broadway would be too remote for calculating, according to an article in the Herald-Tribune recently.

The midnight Harlem floor show, the early morning revue and the late hour uptown dance hall performances are his sesame to the better things below Fifty-ninth Street.

The Negro artist quite often suspicious of a helping hand from white promoters has intuitively come to realize that the way to a job is via audition. He finds a welcome at midnight and if he plays anything worth while daylight doors are open to him. It is practically his own recognition.

Two Notable Examples

In fact last two weeks two notable examples of what midnight shows have done for the Negro actor are best demonstrated by a youngster who was introduced at 2:30 o'clock in the morning to an audience at "Hot Chocolates," and by the Eight Cottonpickers who stumbled into Connie's Inn, in Harlem, along toward the closing hour of 3. a m.

Bill Robinson introduced the youngster to the audinece at "Hot Chocolates." Mr. Robinson, from an aisle seat, glowed as his "find" was cheered into three encores. "My Boy," said Bill —and of course, he isn't. But the lad who never had been admitted to a casting office, was immediately signed for an appearance in the revue at the Hudson Theater.

As for the Cotton Pickers (they are really from Washington and never saw a cotton field), they seemed more in need of food than a try-out. However, once upon the floor of Connie's Inn they forget their hunger in the mad attempt to strut their stuff. They made good and are now a part of the entertainment that Connie presents on Forty-fourth Street.

From Humble Beginnings

"Jazzlips" Richardson, once of the snake shows, was lifted out of the pits of the carnivals at a Harlem night club; Baby Cox, of Birmingham, Ala received her first big hand at 125th Street dance hall, and Eddie Green Bill Higgins and Billy Maxey found "big league" engagments after moaning in the lowdown night haunts of Chicago.

"Hamtree" Harrington, Shelton Brooks (co-author of "Some of These Days"), Ethel Waters, the late Florence Mills and Louise Cook, emerged from the backroom of a floor revue. Edith Wilson, from Jeffersonville, Ind., mind you, walked in cold in a harlem night club three years ago, was given the chance to sing a number or two and before morning was signed for engagements in London, Paris, and Berlin, from which she recently returned.

So it goes. The Negro gets his audition before a paid assemblage and he survives or sinks. He always can be a porter or a playright, he argues, if they don't like him.

Auditions Differ

The midnight audition for Negroes, as far as a beginning goes, is considerably unlike the daylight audition held for white actors. Who wouldn't tremble at a storny producer, seated in a darkened auditorium, his expressionless face indicating only the worst—no job.

And those tryouts are held even today all about town. White actors leave the hall depressed, only to seek another try to warble or step, as the case may be. "Not so hot," any Negro will tell you. And most white actors will second the motion.

In the first place, the Negro is too scary to brave innumerable attempts to impress job givers at private hearings. He dosen't trust the judgement of a single white person. That is he believes in mob rule and, in getting of an opportunity has been right.

Harlem Audience White

Up in Harlem or at midnight performance off Broadway the majority of the eyewitnesses are fair of skin. The Negro prefers this sort of gathering to one of his own color: it is the kind of audience he wants to play if his stuff is acceptable. In short, he'll take a gamble on a thousand whites, but not a single one.

As for such a thing as "actors' representatives" which invade the white field he is a leary, and justly so. Recently a white agent forgot to bring to Mr. Green, of "Hot Chocolates," his check due for phonograph work. Tales of dishonesty are so magnified among the Negro colony that "representative" have been discredited to a point where the majority of struggling sepias ask

only the chance to stand or fall on their own.

The midnight audition, therefore, is considered the one salvation for the Negro "unknown." Besides bringing to the foreground see real talented youngsters in recent months, it also has been a boon to Harlem night club life, because the spectator never knows what sort of added attraction he is in for resulting in Harlem cabarets doing the only night club business in town.

There is adventure in the late--hour revue, The audience gets something it didn't exepect and the legal fraternity call an "open and shut case" No wonder it wins—hands down or hands together—when a new discovery is bared.

"The Isle of Lost Ships" Is a Sea Romance Packed With Hair-Raising Thrills

SAM BAKER, COLORED STAR IN THIS PICTURE

If dramatic climaxes and physical thrills can make your spine tingle and your hair stand on end, that is what will happen to you when you see "The Isle of Lost Ships," at the New Boone Theatre, Sunday, Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Starting right out on a big passenger liner with our hero, Jason Robards, handcuffed to our comedy detective, Robert O'Connor, and bound for New York to stand trial for murder, it builds punch on punch. Of course Robards is really innocent. Virginia Valli is the heroine and when the liner is wrecked—oh, certainly! That's only one exciting incident!—she remembers the hero, who is handcuffed to his bunk.

He saves her from drowning. He also saves the detective from the same fate. Then they drift on the ship into that mysterious region, the Sargasso Sea; and they stand on an unknown floating island of wreckage, peopled by derelict, grotesque humans who have survived other ocean disasters.

Here is where the principal villian, Noah Beery comes in. Behind him is what is probably the most unpicturesque and terrifying band of broken-nosed, cauliflower eared, hard-boiled gentry ever gathered for a picture.

The heroine has to choose a husband right away. Such is the custom of the lost colony. The hero fights to prevent this. Plots are hatched against him. He whips the villian. A submarine escape in the hail of bullets! Forgotten treasure of the Spanish main, in the hands of a quaint little Cockney and a giant Negro!

And then there's the standing of the submarine below the surface because of the seaweed; shooting the hero out of a torpedo tube to free it. and many other hair-raising adventures.

"The Isle of Lost Ships" is marvelous entertainment. It is a First National picture directed by Irvin Willat.

The highly imaginative plot which certainly brushes the cobwebs of business worries and humdrum existence from your brain as you see it unfold on the screen, was devised by Crittenden Marriott. The picture is based on his novel. "The Isle of Dead Ships."

It's a show for everybody; we recommend it without qualification.

Sam Baker, noted Negro actor appears in this all talking picture. You should see him in action.

to be the most thrilling and at the same time the most amusing of all crook plays, comes to the Boone Theatre, Thursday next for a run of three days.

The locale is a dilapidated English manor house, supposed to hide both the loot of a recent bank robbery and the looter. Crooks of various sorts, frightened and spiritualistic ladies, cops, and what not come to the old house—where all are kept in chattering fear by a hidden and mysterious monster who is forever committing some deed or other to put the already ragged nerves of the household in a state of collapse. The whole atmosphere of "The Terror" is English, thus making it altogether different from any play seen on the screen here.

"The Terror" was adapted by Harvey Gates from the phenomenally successful London play by Edgar Wallace. It presents a foreign version of the intrusion of the lawless into society which both in setting and action is distinctly unlike the American crook play.

"The Terror" is played by an all-star cast, including May McAvoy, Louise Fazenda, Edward Everett Francis, Holmes Herbert, John Horton, Mathew Betz, Alec B. Miljan, Otto Hoffman, Joseph Girard and Frank Austin. Roy Del Ruth directed.

Garland Anderson Sells Second Play to Belasco

New York, Nov. 15.—Garland Anderson, well known author of the stage play, "Appearances," which has been produced on Broadway, has just sold his second play, "Extortion," to David Belasco, which is equivalent to saying that he is well on the way to becoming a successful playwright.

Anderson's first play dealt with the struggles of a Race bellhop to succeed in the world in spite of many overwhelming obstacles, and was based on the events of his own life. He, himself a bellboy in a Frisco hotel, wrote his play between shifts.

Anderson told everyone he met of his burning ambition to have the play produced. A cousin of Al Jolson who owned a cigar store in Frisco heard of Anderson and his play. He wrote his famous cousin about him and the latter sent Anderson his fare to New York and paid his expenses for three months.

Producers who read the play decided that it was good, but that it couldn't be produced because it required a mixed cast. It had never been done, nor had any Race playwright ever crashed Broadway.

So Anderson raised $15,000 and produced it himself. He went to people showed them his play, and offered them an interest in it. They subscribed.

The day after the play producers were amazed to find that not a single newspaper reviewer had criticized the fact that there was a mixed cast. And that set a precedent on the American stage. Belasco immediately put "Lulu Bell" in rehearsal. From then on Race plays became popular.

Anderson's second play does not concern Race folk, but a third one which he is just completing does.

Anderson lives at 182 E. Nicholas St. in Harlem, and he has recently sent for his 14-year-old son in order to educate him in New York. "I'm going to see that that boy has an education," Anderson said. "I don't want him handicapped like I was."

'Tell Difference Between White and Our Big Shows

"In the first place, the Negro show has to be clean. Audiences which laugh at smut in white revues walk out at dirt from Negroes," states an article in the New York Telegraph last Sunday.

"The Negro skit writer, knowing this, has only one detour from the smoking-car story—native humor.

"A sample of this is found in 'Hot Chocolates,' that has six blackouts without a vulgar line in any of them. Each skit depends on truthful Negro situations for the humor.

"Next comes the matter of songs. In 'Blackbirds' the whole body was written by a white composer, but two of the most popular present-day sheet music numbers are 'Ain't Misbehavin',' and 'Sweet Savannah Sue,' from 'Hot Chocolates,' and these were written by Negroes.

"A Colored revue takes five to ten weeks to get 'set,' even after the Broadway premiere. a comedian will try a routine of new business on request at any time; he is observing putting into his stunt native remarks heard at random, and he cannot be depended upon at rehearsals.

"The Negro revue artist gets paid twice a week, the midweek salary always coming at the time when a rehearsal is sought. The comedian no matter how black, applies burnt cork for no other reason than that cork is the best facial lotion he knows, and this, incidentally, comes in liquid form and is applied with a sponge."

Theatrical-1929
Individual Troupes, etc.,

NEW YORK HERALD

OCT 13 1929

Midnight Shows Open Broadway Stage to Negro

Harlem Cabaret and Revue Prove Sesame to Better Things Along 'White Way'

The Negro walks in where the Caucasian can't, and for him it is just as well, because otherwise his opportunity for exhibiting his talents to Broadway would be too remote to calculate at one sitting. The midnight Harlem floor show, the early morning revue and the late hour uptown dance hall performances are his sesame to the better things below Fifty-ninth Street.

The Negro artist, quite often unable to read and more often suspicious of a helping hand from white promoters, has intuitively come to realize that the way to a job is via the audition. He finds a welcome at midnight, and if he displays anything worth while daylight doors are open to him. It is practically his only way to recognition.

Two Notable Examples

In the last two weeks two notable examples of what midnight shows have done for the Negro actor are best demonstrated by a youngster who was introduced at 2:30 o'clock in the morning to an audience at "Hot Chocolates," and by the Eight Cottonpickers who stumbled into Connie's Inn, in Harlem, along toward the closing hour of 3 a. m.

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Auditions Differ

This midnight audition for Negroes, as far as a beginning goes, is considerably unlike the daylight audition held for white actors. Who wouldn't tremble at a stony producer, seated in a darkened auditorium, his expressionless face indicating only the worst—no job. Who of "The Merry Widow" and "Everywoman" days ever can forget those daylight auditions held by the late Henry W. Savage, who on one occasion told Taylor Holmes he'd never amount to anything?

And those try-outs are held even today all about town. White actors leave the hall depressed, only to seek another try to warble or step, as the case may be. "Not so hot," any Negro will tell you. And most white actors will second the motion.

In the first place, the Negro is too scary to brave innumerable attempts to impress job givers at private hearings. He doesn't trust the judgment of a single white person. That is, he believes in mob rule and, in the getting of an opportunity, he has been right.

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There is adventure in the late-hour revue. The audience gets something it didn't expect and the beginner gets a hearing. It's what the legal fraternity calls an "open and shut case." No wonder it wins—hands down or hands together—when a new discovery is bared.

$750 A WEEK HER PAY NOW

MISS ESTHER JONES

Tele-Am 10-5-29

ten-year-old dancing star who rose from a street dancer four years ago in Chicago, to the top rung of child artists. With Ma and Pa and a manager she is touring European capitals on a $750 a week guarantee. When no earning a living by dancing Esther [illegible] dolls like any normal child

SWEDES PADLOCK JIM-CROW U. S. RESTAURANT

Insult to U. S. A. Child Abroad, Year's Biggest Scandal.

MILK REFUSED

Swedish Reply Is Invites from Best Families

PARIS.—Little Esther, the ten-year-old dancing wonder, accompanied by her mother, Mrs. Jones of Chicago, and her manager, Sidney Garner, passed through this city on her way to Nice and Monte Carlo to fill engagements there.

She is said to be the highest paid child artist in the world. Sheh as just left Berlin where she played at the Winter Garden at a salary of $750 a week, for 6 weeks.

Her story reads like a fairy tale. Four years ago she was playing in the streets of Chicago, dancing the Charleston just for fun. Her companions were poor like herself. Now she has jewels, and her dresses are being made by some of the best designers. As to offers to appear both on the stage and in the moving pictures, she is getting more than she could fill in ten years from all over Europe. At ten, Little Esther is wealthy.

Started at Five

She scored her first success when just a little over five. There was a Charleston contest and she won first prize. A white manager saw her and got her engagements in New York, Chicago, Toronto, and other cities. Later he brought her to Europe where she made an instant hit.

Appearing at the Casino de Paris, the Moulin Rouge, the Empire, and other theatres, her audiences went wild about her, while the Parisian press gave much space to her. Vu leading illustrated weekly, devoted its entire front page to her picture and carried a two page story about her.

Before Kings and Queens

Since then she has danced and sang in many private homes all over Europe as well as for the King and Queen of Spain, and the King and Queen of Sweden.

Vu said of her: "Dressed in a costume with spangles, like some brilliant little butterfly, the light of the projectors is shining on her. With surprise one realises that her flute-like voice comes distinctly to each in the audience. She sings at first, her body softly swaying to the accompaniment of the popular American songs that she interprets with a very seductive mixture of seriousness and childish mischief.

Doesn't Need Legs

"Truly she is an amusing and delightful little mimic. Now she trembles as if caught by sudden fear, or else she places her hand on her stomach as if suffering from the most frightful pain, then suddenly she is all laughter again. The song finished, Little Esther dances. She dances so lightly, and so freely does her body play above the hips, that really it seems that she does not need legs to move about with. Now she dances easily on one foot while she draws the other unused behind her.

Plays With Dolls

"But what struck me most of all regarding this little black fairy is that, throughout the entire performance she remains the little child who is only playing for her own amusement. Later when I visited her in her dressing room and saw her playing with one of the dolls that some of her innumerable admirers have sent her, I asked her whether she ever got bored with her act. She looked at me, her black eyes big with surprise, and answered, Why?'

And this is all true. In spite of her successes, Little Esther has remained the merry, laughing child she was on the streets of Chicago. She loves play, all her work is as play, and to make a hit with her, play with her.

She is full of life and speed, and her build is almost perfection itself. Her legs, arms and back are wonderfully strong and muscular, and her skin is as smooth as silk. She is so gay and winsome that when she walks on the streets she always has an admiring crowd behind her, and when she comes into a restaurant many strangers call to her as she passes.

Breaks Every Record

The London Sunday People says of her: "Thousands flock no longer to herself, or the clever American ballet the Moulin Rouge to see Mistinguette girls, or the beautiful women of the chorus, but to applaud a little mite ten years old, who has won fame and wealth within the space of a few weeks.

"We are living in an age of speed but this amazing little child has broken every record of sudden theatrical success."

Of all the countries she has visited, Little Esther has had the biggest success in Sweden, not because of her talent alone, but because the owner of a restaurent, one Branda Tomton, who had lived in America, refused to serve her a glass of milk because she is colored. The Swedish papers made it hot for Tomton, while Little Esther her mother, and her manager, received invitations from some of the highest persons, socially, to visit them in their homes, just to show how strongly they disapproved of Tomton's conduct.

The Dagblad called the incident "the greatest scandal Stockholm has ever had." Causing as much sensation as a real crime.

The Stockholm Dagblad also made an inquiry at all the leading restaurants and hotels regarding their attitude toward receiving colored people, and it said: "Our inquiry shows that in all our leading restaurants, and hotels Little Esther or any other Negro would be received with pleasure, except at Branda Tomton's. Little Esther, especially, would be welcomed because of her popularity."

Kids Brought Flowers

Such a shower of ridicule poured in on Tomton that he was forced to close. He was caricatured in several of the leading papers, while Lititle Esther's popularity rose higher than ever. When she left, a crowd of schoolchildren came to see her off, presenting her flowers and inviting her to return to Stockholm.

Mother is Proud

Mrs. Jones, a modest, quiet little woman, is very proud of her daughter. To her the astonishing success of her little girl seems more like a dream than reality—this leap from humble circumstances to wealth and popularity.

White Manager Failed

She told this writer that it is Mr Garner to whom is due all the thanks for her present financial standing and said that the white manager who brought her from America treated her very badly. She further charges that he used to pass her off as the maid of his child when Little Esther gave performances in private homes.

At the home of M. Dreyfus, Paris banker, Mrs. Jones said that she was made to wait in the hall, and that when M. Dreyfus, himself, came out and saw her, and learned who she was, he invited her in and introduced her to his guests. The white manager scolded her and asked if she did not know that that that wasn't done back home.

Mr. Garner, who comes from New York City, has been in Europe fifteen years and has made a splendid record with the American Red Cross with whom he served as an ambulance driver from the first year of the war.

He has served as secretary for Johnny Hudgins and others. He says that he finds an increasing demand for colored acts everywhere.

His address is: 17 Rue des Acacia Paris, France, care of Pons.

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Troupes etc.

IN NEW YORK TOWN

By GERALDYN DISMOND
(Exclusive to The Bee in Chicago)

NEGRO EXPERIMENTAL THEATRE ANNOUNCES TRYOUTS

The Negro Experimental Theatre which is housed in the Library Play House in West 135th Street, has announced tryouts for February 13, 20, and 27, the remaining Wednesdays in this month. Applicants will be requested to read dialect and non-dialect material, which will be supplied by the play reading committee, and if they wish, may bring one selection of their own choosing. Fifteen minutes will be allowed each member. Appointments should be made with the secretary, Marion Beasley. Tryouts begin promply at 7:30.

GERALDYN DISMOND

The regular monthly business meeting was held Wednesday, February 6th. Jessie Fauset was added to the play reading committee. Theophilus Lewis was made assistant business manager, Bill Jackson of Montclair, N. J., stage manager and Geraldyn Dismond, chairman of publicity. Reports were made by all committees. All interested persons are cordially invited to join. Mrs. John E. Mail, Dr. Gertrude Curtis and Mrs. Lottie Cooper of East Orange, N. J., became members at the last meeting.

A'LELIA WALKER ENTERTAINED IN ST. LOUIS

At last I got an honest-to-goodness letter from A'Lelia Walker, who is giving her over-worked heart a rest at Hot Springs, Ark. But with her, she carried the memories of a jam-up visit to St. Louis. St. Louis was her home until she left to attend Knoxville College and she had not been back in 29 years; so you can imagine the celebration. Personally, I don't see how she stood up under the barrage of parties, but I certainly would have enjoyed trying to make the grade with her.

Her hostess was Mrs. E. Crawford who started the social ball a-rolling with a reception the first Sunday of her visit. The house was beautifully decorated and in addition to the 75 ladies who called, the board of directors of the People's Hospital, board members of the Old Folks' Home and the St. Paul Missionaries, her mother's church and her own when she was a girl, sent lovely flowers. Then the J. E. Mitchells (Mr. Mitchell is the editor of the Argus), gave a wonderful dinner party for twelve in her honor; Mrs. Nell McMahon, an elegant card party at which she received a beautiful guest prize; Dr. and Mrs. A. W. Craddock, a party at which everything under the sun was served; Mrs. W. B. Greer, a card party at which she received another guest prize; Mrs. Jack Shepperd and Mrs. Hattie McWorter, one of those affairs from soup to nuts: Dr. and Mrs. E. J. Gregg, a just-too-bad turn out; Dr. and Mrs. J. W. Smith, a party out of this world; Miss Beatrice Tyler and Mrs. Tyler, the most beautiful dancing party at which the favors were long-legged French dolls; Mr. and Mrs. Saunders and Mr. A. Howard, a midnight luncheon—"King soup" a-plenty; Mr. and Mrs. George Claxton, a wonderful dancing party with all the trimmings; Mrs. G. B. Key, an elegant bridge party of twelve tables with extraordinary prizes and a special guest prize; Miss Vivian Hunter and her sister, Mrs. Stanton Page, and Mrs. Dot Gossen, a great party; Mrs. Cox had her club party at the residence of Mrs. Guss Thornton; Atty. and Mrs. Daniel W. Bowles, Dr. and Mrs. F. C. Cox and Mr. Douglas Carlisle turned on a cabaret party of 58 that just wouldn't wait; Mrs. Jessie D. Robinson, a life-long friend of her mother's, contributed in every way possible to the comfort and pleasure of her stay; Miss Ellabell Douglass, Mrs. Crawford's sister, Dr. Douglass, Miss V. Hyatt, Mrs. Etta Gates, Dr. C. H. Phillips and Mr. Preston Myers sent lovely presents as their expression of hospitality and last but not least, the president and secretary, Mae Williams and Ardenia Martin of the Walker agents, presented her with a book "The Optimistic's Good Night." If that doesn't sound like a fairy tale, I give up. Fancy having so many affairs especially in your honor! All I can add is: If only I had been there!

MIRIAM TRICE—SWEET GIRL GRADUATE

Mr. and Mrs. Lester R. Trice, of Dean street, Brooklyn, gave a party on Monday, February 4th for their daughter, Miriam, who graduated from the girls' high school with honors. Among those present were Mr. and Mrs. Wm. Alexander, Mr. and Mrs. Arnin Swann, Mr. and Mrs. Edw. Ewann, Mr. and Mrs. Howard Trice, Mr. and Mrs. L. Amore, Mr. and Mrs. John Freeman, Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Wyatt, Mr. and Mrs. Carl Brown, Mr. and Mrs. Jack Ford, Mr. and Mrs. Jas. Foster, Mr. and Mrs. Jos. Robinson, Mr. and Mrs. Williams, Mr. and Mrs. Matthew Elliott, Mr. and Mrs. Percy Smith, Mr. and Mrs. R. Coles, Mrs. Enos Entemy, Mrs. R. Dawson, Mrs. John Johns, Mrs. Jack Baillou, Mrs. Ted Sommerset, Misses Juanita Harris, Dorothy Gatewood. Madeline Trice, Hubert Trice, Drs. Geo. Wright, Gerald Leon, Messrs. C. Bell, Leon Gaskill, Wm. Bibbins, Fred Perry, Lloyd Brown, Wm. Wormley, Alfred Miller, Leroy Thompson, James Edward, Walter Thompson, Arthur Trappier, J. H. Swann Jr., and Master Lester R. Trice, Jr.

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135TH ST. PUBLIC LIBRARY CELEBRATE NEGRO HISTORY WEEK

In celebration of Negro History Week, Mr. Arthur Schomburg, known book-collector and author spoke on "Some Experiences in Digging Up the Negro's Past," last Friday evening at the 135th Street Branch of the public library. It will be remembered that this rare collection of African and Negro-Americana was purchased in 1926 by the Carnegie Corporation and presented to the 135th Street Library, where it is housed in the division of Negro Literature and History, 3rd floor of the library.

There is an exhibit in this room of the library, a group of landscapes in oils and water colors done by Antonia Jarvis, a young artist from St. Thomas, Virgin Islands. He had been a frequent contributor to Opportunity Magazine and in 1927 won the 2nd award in art. He has successfully portrayed colorful landscapes of the tropics in his water colors. This exhibit will continue through February 26th.

Special exhibits of books representing all phases of Negro life, culture and achievements are also to be found in this room. One can read the lives of our famous statesmen, authors, musicians, scientists, abolitionists, ministers, and poets, dating from the seventeenth century to the present time, including such men as Jacob Capitein, a West African scholar educated at the University of Leyden, Holland, whose Dutch thesis on the slave trade in 1742 is in the collection; Jupiter Hammond, the first American Negro poet; William W. Brown, writer during the Reconstruction period; Alexander Crummell, minister; and Toussaint L'Ouverture, the great liberator of Haiti.

Among some of the recent new books added to the collection are the following: Seabrook's "Magic Island," a most unusual book on voodooism in Haiti; Macreagh's "Last of Free Africa," on Abyssinia; Peterkin's "Scarlet Sister Mary," another of the author's charming novels on plantation life in South Carolina; Boas' "Anthropology and Modern Life"; Hyman's "Study in Bronze," the story of a mulatto girl in Jamacia; Golleck's "Sons of Africa," sketches of prominent contemporary Africans including the late J. E. K. Aggrey, educater.

STATE
COLUMBIA, S. C.

FEB 3 1929

Du Bose Heyward's New-Negro Saga.

"Mamba's Daughters" is not a larger or a longer "Porgy." We almost wish it were, but that task was impossible.

In "Porgy" Du Bose Heyward told us pretty nearly all he had or will ever have to tell us of the true Negro of the old day, and told it adequately, satisfactorily, beautifully. He may add a touch here, some overlooked or withheld characteristic, some quaintness or delight; but he perfected his tribute and portraiture of the real Negro type—and there is hardly more than one, at bottom, only one of which a seasoned observer, fed on the traditions and life of the South, can look at and say: "Nigguh—pyo Nigguh"—perfected this type, we say, in the curiously and wistfully delightful old Negro of Catfish Alley. At the core of every true Negro type we shall find, if we look closely enough, this bit of Africa. Just as we say of any well-drawn character in British fiction—"English to the core," so "Nigguh—pyo Nigguh."

The first adventures of Bamba, Africa infiltrating into the enemy's ranks and then living off his country, is set far enough back to establish "contact" and necessary relationships and derivations; but the real theme and purpose of the story is tucked away nearly a hundred pages beyond. It is the New Negro. Mamba conceives the remarkable notion of intrenching herself in the white camp, gradually becoming part and a ruling part of it, and bringing up her "daughters"—Hagar her real daughter, and Lissa her granddaughter, Hagar's miraculously gifted child.

Lissa is maneuvered early into high Negro circles through the Reformed Church that is ruled by the yellow four hundred of Charleston, all members being of a certain shade of bright tan. Lissa, it soon appears, possesses the requisite nuance ...a circumstance that makes Kate Wentworth, whom Mamba has so thoroughly exploited, say of the girl, when she sweeps New York off its supposedly sophisticate feet with her triumph as a singer:

"Who, in pity's name, from a section which is famous for its aristocracy, elected to go and hunt up

Negroes to be sung about?...Mamba's Lissa! Hagar's! Still more incredible. The girl's air of distinction—style—they must have come from somewhere...I wonder what could have been her—No, don't say it—don't think it. Shame upon you, Kate Wentworth. You are forgetting yourself. To a lady, the ——'s of mulattoes do not exist."

That gaping extinguishing dash covers, like its charity, a multitude of sins.

There is, so far as we discerned, no hint from her mother or Mamba that Lissa was not wholly Negro in blood and genius. Mr. Heyward says, page 93, that it was "Mamba's inflexible determination to give the girl her chance to (sic) the new Negro life that she felt to be so full of possibilities." "Yo' an' me, Hagar—What de hell is we?—Nuttin'!" And when Mamba asks Lissa, in some trepidation, about her new friends, in those high colored circles that the author calls "haut societe"—"But all dem new frien' yo' got—ain't dey yo' kind? What's de matter wid dem?", the young girl retorts:

"Oh, I don't know...They seem to spend all their time saying how glad they are to be Negroes, and all the time they're trying their damnedest to be white."

There is, surely and distressingly, a little too much of this race stuff in the story...for the security and joy of the story. We almost see the propitiatory hand of Professor Paul Green, who so marvelously belarded the Negro in his Introduction to Adams's straightforward Nigger-to-Nigger tales in "Congaree Sketches." The real story is, of course, that of the three Negro women—Mamba and Hagar and Lissa; but there is a too thrustingly prominent story of that quaint Charleston-named hero and god in the machine, Saint Julien de Chatigny Wentworth, his marooned old mother, relict of the Confederacy, and the inevitable tourists and their yellow tide—"roll down their golden 'sand.'" The rich Northern invader is entirely essential—and Saint allies himself with them and even takes unto himself a woman of Moab for wife.

The "Line" which the author leaps over again and again, with such saltant abandon, will, perhaps, always remain a barrier of some sort, very definitely high and adamantine, no matter what two races it sunders. And there is ever something repugnant and distasteful in the mingling of races—a thing that is justly abhorred, always by one, and sometimes by both, as with the Japanese and any other strain. The story of "Mamba's Daughters" would have been many times stronger and saner and better if it had been kept like "Black April," "Scarlet Sister Mary," and "Nigger to Nigger," wholly on the black side of the Line. This is brought out in the naive discussion of our finally "mistering" the Negro. Saint reflects: "Good morning, Mister Broaden (Negro banker), saying it like that—meaning it...why not? Little enough, God knows." Yet even white folks have stopped "mistering" one another.

But, we feel sure, there is the manifest intention to stage this bit of fiction, and on the northern stage where this blend of race will whet the interest of the spectators. When someone mentions, at a high Negro social function, the acting of Charles Gilpin in "Emperor Jones," a Negro woman says:

"That's ancient history. Why there are a dozen or more top-liners now, and lots of capable artists earning handsome incomes." And an old woman has just remarked:

"Why if a Negro wants to hear one of his own color he has to get a seat in the gallery. We are not good enough to sit in the orchestra yet, but they will pay three dollars apiece to hear us sing or act."

Later, when Lissa storms New York with her singing, some member of the audience—evidently a critic—says: "Can't you see it's new? Can't you feel that it is something of our own—American—something that Stallings and Harley got a glimmer of in 'Deep River'—that the Theater Guild caught the pictorial side of in PORGY?"

So Mamba and Hagar and Lissa and the over-brutalized Gilly Bluton—"the Prince"—will add to the glamorous gallery of Porgy and Crown and his Bess.

If we may seem to stress too heavily the double purpose of the story, as we see it—to sing the saga of the emergence of the New Negro from the old and from a too obvious and dreaded "blend," in what is known as "going white"; and in creating a basis for another "Porgy" triumph on the stage—we are not oblivious to its tremendous merits. Let us be, first, a little frank. It is nothing like so fine a story or piece of writing as "Porgy." And it is crude in both composition, artistry of treatment, and its views of both white and black. But there is, taken in its entirety, a thrilling narrative and very much excellent and enduring sketching of the Negro and the Negro blend. It is, to be brief, stirring melodrama. The author has not yet re-found himself since his great refusal and capitulation in his unfortunate pot-boiler (if there ever was one), the amazing story of "Angel," coming as sequel to the resplendent "Porgy."

The best part of this book, as will be, we think, true as to all the work of Du Bose Heyward, the portraiture of the real black—African, with nothing of "America" in the type except what would be inevitable through long environment—the superb drawing, full length and pulsing with jungle life, of Hagar, Mamba's daughter and mother and inspirer of Lissa. His Hagar would redeem the story from a thousand shortcomings.

Next in power and charm, we should set the author's seemingly half-conscious satire of Charleston, the city that made him and whose name and cultural stigmata he will bear forever stamped on his heart. The attitude and pose of the city, as if of the sisterhood of London, Paris, Athens, is made to seem pathetic, almost tragic. The "New People" are done with a familiar and masterly touch that brings both them and the "natives" into the devastating picture. Take this delicious morceau:

"New people...renting old houses, secretly purchasing antiques, learning to say 'gyarden' and 'cyar,' creating the illusion of indigenousness."

But these newcomers can never boast, as the Kleithenes new people in Athens dared not, that this immensity of culture and refined speech and manner was "their possession always."

Another delicious bit is in the author's reading the "r" out of our English speech. It is not heard in that region—as silent as the "r" in "Cha'st'n." The De Chatigny Wentworths are shocked by "hearing, from one of the invaders"—

"A loud clear voice rolling R's" ...What sacrilege! If not entirely satire.

And the breezy "uitlander," George P. Atkinson, whose ten years in the South "had not blurred his Mid-Western outline"...Two years in Virginia had left him guiltless of a broad A"—he would have had to flatten it in Charleston had he taken on the customs of the country—"and now he went about the Charleston streets obviously ROLLING HIS R'S BEFORE HIM." We are glad for George P. that the sin was committed "obliviously."

These aliens pay us back by their r-less "Ca'lina."

Charleston is faithfully represented in the comment that, as in Mother England, there are "only certain occupations that a gentleman could follow." But the De Chatigny Wentworth goes into fertilizer!

The certain race repugnance we have spoken of, which is in the blood of all virile races, somehow seems to blur the picture the author attempts of the beauty of the Negro. He might have undertaken to have at least one of his beautiful sitters a full black, but Gardinia and Lissa are "colored." He has one of his whites say that they could not see "beauty in a Negro." There are beautiful Negroes, in their own types; but when Du Bose Heyward tries to put Negro beauty on his reluctant canvas the rebel pigments smudge and blur.

The book closes...or shall we say, the curtain comes down?...in a rather obvious dramatization of the Negro as stage material. He is, no doubt, magnificent for that role, and we shall see the stride and shuffle and hear the matchless forest-thunder of his voice on many stages; but it would be better, as a seasoned newspaper man advises, to drag in the real Negro, and let him do his stuff than to prepare so elaborately for his "next" entrance.

Lissa's singing of the fine anthem of the American Negro, by James Weldon Johnson, is very spiritedly and finely achieved. It wins its "effects" even in cold type.

Although the story, as story and art, can hardly fail to disappoint some of the radiant hopes we all of us have planted and watered for Du Bose Heyward's future work, it is sure of a certain success, more opulent outside the South than within it. But this was to be expected as inevitable—and for some lean years more.

The publishers are Doubleday, Doran and Company, Garden City, N. Y.

"Frisco" Most Popular in Europe

News European Correspondent Tells of Successful Colored Entertainer

By J. A. ROGERS.

PARIS—Frisco (Jocelyn Bingham) has returned to Paris, after spending several months in Berlin. Frisco has the reputation of being Europe's most popular entertainer and has, perhaps, come in contact with more of the great ones of the earth than any Negro living. When this correspondent asked Frisco to tell him some of the persons whom he entertained and at whose homes he has given private parties he replied, in his characteristic way:

"Make it short and snappy. Just say I have played for everybody, from kings to bums."

Bruce Reynolds, in "Paris With the Lid Lifted," says of him: "This big black man, Frisco, has no equal on earth as a shouter, a stepper and a master of ceremonies. Princes, lords and dukes come here and love it. Frisco pulls them right out of their chairs, no matter how blazing their coat-of-arms; and he drags them out in the middle of the floor and they Charleston and Black-bottom and do everything he tells them to do; and, in return, they plaster 100-franc notes all over his perspiring face; and then everybody in the place rocks the walls with a joy-thunder."

Frisco has entertained in almost all of the leading cities of Europe during the past eight years as, also, in Egypt, Turkey and North Africa. In Berlin he recently entertained at the Casanova, which has the reputation of being the leading dance-hall in Europe, as well as at the Metropole Theatre in that city, where he played in the operetta, "The Merry Widow."

While in Berlin he was socially entertained by the Lady Marie von Hindenburg, sister of the Marshal von Hindenburg, President of Germany, who invited several persons of distinction to meet him. Frisco has her letter of invitation, which he highly values. In Paris, London, Madrid, Vienna he has been welcomed not only as an entertainer but as guest by many of the social elite.

Frisco is in perpetual good-humor and, in addition to being one of the best-liked men in Paris, is one of best-dressed, attracting attention as he walks along by his tall and shapely figure. He has a beautiful home on the Rue de Rome, a Mathis car and above all, a three-year-old son, of whom he is very proud. Young Frisco is already a good dancer and can put some surprising jazz movements in his dancing.

Frisco has a scrap-book filled with articles from the German press alone which spoke of him most enthusiastically. Before coming to Europe he played in almost every night club of importance in America, from Seattle and San Francisco to New York, as well as in the South.

He is mentioned in magazines and books all over Europe. "A Continental Cocktail," speaking of Frisco some years ago, said:

"Frisco comes over to your table, puts out his hand, and tells you you're shaking hands with the colored boy 'who entertains all Paris.' And then he rears and tears and opens up a Charleston contest among the audience. The smartest men and girls in evening dress get up under his pepping influence and that of various beverages, fling dignity out of the window, and at six in the morning are still Charlestoning themselves all over the place."

Theatrical ~1929

Individual Troupes, etc.;

George Dewey Washington Is at Hippodrome, London; 3 Eddies Are in Switzerland

Chicago Defender

By IVAN H. BROWNING

London, Eng., May 29.—George Dewey Washington, after a wonderful run at the big Palladium Kit Kat club and Holborn Empire, is appearing at the Hippodrome, Manchester, the finest hall on the Stoll tour (outside of London).

George Dewey is in a class by himself and believe me he has certainly established himself in a fine way with the English audiences. He returns to London next week where he will appear at the popular Alhambra and play a quick return to the Kit Kat club. He opens at the beautiful Ambassadeurs club in gay Paree next month for four four weeks, afterward returning to America. An unusual honor has just come to him in that he has been asked to come to Spain (Madrid), to sing for the popular King of Spain. Leaving London a week before opening at the Ambassadeurs in Paris, he will go direct to Spain for one performance before His Royal Highness. I am sure his many American friends are, like myself, most delighted with George Dewey's great success in Europe and he will always be assured of a big welcome should he return to Europe. He is indeed a clever artist, and like the great Robeson, George Dewey's head remains the same size.

The Musical Spillers are still on the go and are playing the Empire Stratford with the Kings Theater Sunderland to follow. Manager Spillers is one of the best all around men in the business and deserves much credit for his up-to-date ideas and in keeping abreast with the times.

After an extended Provincial tour the popular Layton and Johnstone return to London where they will certainly receive a big welcome at the Victoria Palace.

Dapper Danny Small and his beautiful wife were an outstanding success at the Palladium last week in a big act called "Dixie Revels" with the Four Harmony Kings at the Three Eddies. The act justified its billing, position and all and it would be a tremendous hit in America as well. It provided, as the London Referee said, "a veritable feast of melody, mirth and tiptop terpsichorean activities." I am sure the London representatives of the variety will again fail to make mention of "Dixie Revels" since it was the biggest hit in the last half of a very fine program.

Dorothy Brendon's "Black Ace" opened at the Globe theater and judging from all paper reports it will have a very short run. Willie Williams, American Race man, and L. Gibson are the only ones of our group that have speaking parts. There is an all-Race singing chorus in the show and they were trained by the very capable John C. Payne Esq.

The English Blackbirds, headed by Eddie Hunter, Johnny Nitt and Williams and Taylor, are finishing the season with the revue and are at present in Belfast, Ireland, with Dublin to follow.

The Three Eddies are returning to the continent shortly and will open in Switzerland for the month of June with southern France to follow.

Frank Cumminger and his Kentucky dancers are at the exclusive Ambassadeurs club in London and are doing fine. Elliot Carpenter arranged several of the singing numbers.

Gilbert Holland, basso, who has been a big success with the English touring "Showboat" company, sailed for America.

The very successful London show, "Virginia," closes this week at the Palace theater, after a nine months run. The show closing so soon came somewhat as a surprise to everyone especially since it is one of the real hits of the London season.

Popular Walter Richardson will play a short season of variety before returning to America and the well known Jimmie Fergerson opens next week on the D. J. Clarke tour at the famous old Argyle theater, Birkenhead. Richardson and Fergerson have had a great season in the West End and each were easily an outstanding hit in this splendid English production.

The Four Harmony Kings, with their variety road combination, are at the opera house, Tunbridge Wells, with the Hippodrome, Norwich, to follow and the Hippodrome, Ipswich, the week of May 27.

"Porgy" has been a success from an artistic viewpoint. On the other hand the English people do not understand what it was all about, therefore C. B. Cochran decided rather than continue to lose money he has put up the closing notices. Unless business picks up decidedly the show will close next week. In the last day or so the newspapers have started another big boost which should in a big measure help the business quite a bit. It is rumored that Sir Alfred Butt is bringing "Harlem" to London, if so he too will lose money. The English audiences only appreciate revues or musical comedies where our people are concerned and they love to hear them sing and see them dance.

Danny Small and partner will play the Pavilion, Glasgow, Scotland, next week and after a week or two more in England and a brief visit in Paris they will sail for America. Danny's act is really in a class by itself and is one of the classiest seen in London in quite some time. Beautiful music, wonderfully arranged, fine personalities and great showmanship. We need more acts like Danny Small and his "Creole Belle."

T. Elder Hearn's "Dark Town Scandals" are playing in and around London for the next three or four weeks. It is reported that the show will shortly close. I saw the show recently and enjoyed parts of it very much. Miss Elizabeth, Smith and Hazel Van Leah are outstanding hits in the show, while G. H. Carlile (formerly of Carlile and Wellman) works very hard and all through the show Mr. Carlile is still an A No. 1 artist and as I sat listening to him I realized at once just why he and his partner, Wellman, were such a sensational success in England a few years ago. His personality and showmanship is quite unusual and I particularly enjoyed his work. To have remained in Europe these many years and still able to measure up with some of the best is indeed wonderful and Mr. Carlile deserves much credit. He and his wife (who is also his variety partner) are leaving "Dark Town Scandals" in a fortnight and will play the halls for the remainder of the summer.

For his opening at the Kit Kat club in Piccadilly recently, George Dewey Washington had as his special guest besides pretty Mrs. Marie Washington, Mr. and Mrs. Walter Richardson, Mr. and Mrs. Ivan H. Browning and Mr. and Mrs. Danny Small. George Dewey's reception was perhaps the biggest that has been at the popular Kit Kat club this season. He sang in his usual wonderful way and was accompanied by the red hot Abe Lyman's American band.

Lady Mary Cook accompanied Mrs. Maurine Browning and her young daughter, Haroldine Leota, to Southampton when they sailed on the Berengaria for New York.

It is most extraordinary when one stops to think of how dependent the musical world, especially in America, is on Race music. On the other hand, it is interesting indeed to know that Race music predominates as it never has before anywhere and as I sat listening with much interest to Paul Robeson during his wonderful concert at the great Albert Hall it was plainly noticed that even though Robeson simply charmed the audience with his beautiful rendition of the mighty spirituals, the songs themselves had an effect on the people which showed that Race music in time will bring about a great understanding between the black and white races and will wipe away race prejudice as nothing else can. Robeson's success at Albert Hall was easily the crowning point in his musical career and he deserves an unlimited amount of credit in being able to more than justify his appearance at such a hall.

We are indeed proud of Paul Robeson and there is nothing he could have done or will do that will help him and help the Race as well any more than singing to 8,000 people at Albert Hall.

An unusual thing about Robeson is his quiet, unassuming and lovely manner. He is another example of "success does not have to change one to a great extent" and I'm afraid that he is one of the very few really big artists living that great success hasn't in a big measure changed. Robeson's success is international and he certainly has right to be proud of his unusual accomplishments and those of his sincere friends will, I'm sure, wish him continued success at all times.

He is doing a series of summer concerts for Lionell Powell agency and, of course, the answer is turn away business everywhere he appears. He is kept quite busy in England until the last of July. On the other hand plans are being completed for his long tour this coming season on the exclusive International Celebrity tour throughout Europe.

N.Y. WORLD

APR 23 1929

SHAKESPEARE FUND RISES ON BIRTHDAY

U. S. Contributions to Avon Memorial Theatre $828,750

$2,500,000 SET AS GOAL

Americans Co-operate to Rebuild and Endow Playhouse

In commemoration to-day of William Shakespeare's 365th birthday, the American Shakespeare Foundation, cooperating with the British committee to rebuild and endow the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon reports a total of $828,750 collected in this country.

This sum includes $250,000 given by John D. Rockefeller jr. to the British committee and the same amount to the American committee.

In a letter to Viscount Burnham, President of the Board of Governors of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, Mr. Rockefeller wrote his contribution had been given "in recognition of the debt which Great Britain and the United States in common owe to Shakespeare for all that he has meant to the millions of people of both countries whose lives have been enriched and inspired by his genius." A similar letter was sent to Thomas W. Lamont, Chairman of the Advisory Council of the American Shakespeare Foundation.

$2,500,000 Needed

The American Foundation has pledged itself to raise $1,000,000 of the necessary $2,500,000 for the rebuilding and endowing of the theatre. Great Britain and other countries are to raise the balance. It is planned to have the full amount by July 1, when the foundation stone of the new theatre will be laid. America will be represented at the ceremony by a delegation from the American Foundation and by many visitors from this country who make a pilgrimage to Shakespeare's native town in the summer. Last year more than 30,000 persons visited Stratford-on-Avon.

Funds collected by both the British and American committees are reported as sufficient to build the theatre and to provide a nucleus for endowment, but the larger part of the total for endowment remains to be raised. The British committee reports that with the Rockefeller gift, its total so far approximates the sum given in this country.

The old Shakespeare Memorial Theatre at Stratford-on-Avon was destroyed by fire March 6, 1926. A few days later a letter signed by Stanley Baldwin, J. Ramsay MacDonald, the late Earl of Asquith and the late Thomas Hardy, appealing for gifts for the rebuilding of a new theatre, "worthy of Shakespeare's native town and sufficient for present and future needs," was published in London and New York. Simultaneous with this appeal a drive for funds opened in England and the next month the American Shakespeare Foundation was established with Percy S. Bullen as honorary secretary.

Book Six Feet By Four

A book, 6 feet high by 4 feet broad, records the names of American donors. It was taken all over the country and this summer will be sent to Stratford-on-Avon to become a part of the Shakespeare library.

Many American colleges are endowing Chairs for the new theatre at $1,000 each in memory of prominent Americans. The American committee reports that a new one has been promised to-day on Shakespeare's birthday by the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. A canvass by that organization has obtained $1,000 to endow the "Ira Aldridge Memorial Chair" in honor of Ira Aldridge, famous Negro actor, who achieved his greatest distinction in 1833 at Convent Garden in London, when he played Othello to the Iago of Edmund Kean, the foremost English actor of that time.

LEADER

Rockville, Conn.

MAY 17 1929

MINSTRELS.

One of the most persisting forms of "show" or entertainment is a minstrel performance, and this city, as for many years back, continues to have them, as local press reports show. Neither amateur theatricals, band and vocal concerts, movies, nor "talkies" have yet quite put out of business the old reliable minstrel show. Like everything else, there are modern and new ways of "putting one on", but no minstrel show really lives up to its name without plenty of burnt cork and wide red mouths in the make-up. To over-refine them with "white-face" artists is like try-

ing to play Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark,—or should we say "Othello" without "The Moor of Venice"?

A history of what is generally called "negro minstrelsy" would cover a long time and be filled with many famous names of such entertainers Probably "Billy Garvie" of the Hartford Times show-writing staff has a whole library of minstrel literature and a big album of old showbills and pictures of the real "old timers". But right here in Rockville there are still a few men who can recall the days when the old opera house and Henry Theater used to be filled to capacity for a minstrel show. And it is well within the recollection of plenty of people hereabouts when the parading minstrels of the one-night stands made their mid-day appearance in brave array of scarlet and gold and other flaming-hued costumes. These now seem all gone by; and most if not all of the bigger troupes that used to be in Hartford for a whole week appear to have given up the field to musical comedies and "girlie shows". But for local purposes, and in an amateur way, when it seems to be a puzzle what to do next to raise a little money, somebody still says, "Let's put on a regular old-time minstrel". So with the assistance of the local "old timers", "Bones" and "Tambo" and other end men, the Interlocutor and the chorus, are again revived **and the** fun is on.

Much of the fun and enjoyment of the genuine minstrel show is in the way the people on the stage and those in the audience appear to make up one big show. There is an informality and free-and-easy way of "putting them over" that make the songs and choruses and jokes something different from the ordinary concert or stage play.

The jokes may sometimes get a bit "raw" and personal, but as a rule they are taken as meant, and usually the joke'ee has as much enjoyment

r the joker. People go expecting to a good laugh, as much for the alized humor as for the "old chest- s" that have done duty since the minstrel show, whenever that

Some of the most popular ballads, like Stephen Foster's, and hundreds besides his, were introduced and made popular through the old-time minstrels. Many of them are still heard, practically every night, over the radio. We get the melody and the words, but perhaps we enjoy them most, that is the older ones amongst us do, because they take us back in memory to the days of Primrose and West, "Haverford's", "Sam Hague's, "Moore and Burgess," "Dockstader's", and other famous minstrel troupes.

New days, new ways. New songs and new jokes. But when minstrels get so new that the end men don't wear trick wigs any more, nor roll the whites of their eyes and grin from ear to ear on a blacked-up background, then even Rockville will conclude that "the minstrels ain't what they once was"

New Negro Show at Hudson Theatre Is Disappointment

"MESSIN' AROUND," at the Hudson Theatre, with an all-Negro cast, is a disappointment. Instead of portraying Negro life as it actually is, it spends the major part of the evening in imitating the whites. The few scenes which do not attempt to be smart are the best especially the singing of Spirituals by a female trio.

The best bet, however, is an actual four-round boxing match between the only two licensed women boxers in America. The bout on the Hudson stage is better than many a well-advertised high-priced fight. None of the punches are pulled and if anyone is interested in viewing a boxing bout between two members of the "weaker sex," here is their opportunity.

The entertainment starts very slowly, but develops speed as it continues, and is able to come to an end with plenty of noise. In spite of that, something seems lacking. There is no outstanding figure in the cast, such as Bill Robinson is in "Blackbirds." Of course, every Negro musical entertainment need not have a Bill Robinson, but it should have at least one or two actors or actresses that one can remember after leaving the theatre. The only one who is noteworthy to that extent in the present production is James (Slim) Thompson, who is a fairly good comedian, but nevertheless has not got "it." As to the dancing, it is rather mild.

There is no plot to the play. At least, for that we can be thankful. The opening scene is Lenox Ave. and 135th St. From there we visit a fortune teller, then the Mississippi River, a carnival and the final scene, a Harlem night club.

While none of the songs will set the town afire, several of them are fairly good. They are "Get Away From My Window," "Shout On," "Skiddle De Scow" and the theme song (if we can call it that) "Messin' Around."

Members of the cast, in addition to Mr. Thompson, include Sterling Grant, Cora La Redd, Hilda Perleno, Billy McLaurin, and the two female boxers, Emma Maitland and Aurelia Wheeldin.

Someone in the lobby during the intermission said that the play is a "mess," making a pun out of its name. It is not quite as terrible as that, but, without a doubt, it could be much better.

McMillan Writes Interesting Review Of Blackbirds In Paris

Our group of 19, save two, went to see "Blackbirds" last Friday night, July 26, in Paris. They are playing in a popular theatre, located in the heart of the gay city. Both the theatre and the players are advertised with loud, conspicuous electric signs and posters. Additional bills and posters are circulated through the city, announcing the presence of the Negro performers. They are the hideous signs that one finds in towns like Baltimore, Richmond, Norfolk and Philadelphia, making believe that the Negro of the yesterdays is still here.

The theatre was pretty well filled. There were some vacancies, but not a great number. A number of the patrons were Americans and other English speaking people. In that much of the performance consists of action even those who did not understand English could get just about all that was to be gotten from such a cheap and simple affair.

—o—

The accompanying jazz orchestra is about half colored and half white. The director is a white man; the wind instruments and the drum and the piano are manned by Negroes and the stringed instruments by the whites. On the left of the director are seated the whites and on the right the colored. One exception, if the man playing the bass horn, he sits on the left of the director. Another distinction between the races in the orchestra is that the Negroes wear red ties and grayish brown suits while the white men wear white dress shirts and semi-dress clothes.

Among the scenery display in the "Blackbirds" in Paris is a Negro girl dressed in a loud striped dress, rolling her big, red eyes and eating away on a big slice of red ripe watermelon. Another is that of a huge-mouthed Negro blowing a saxophone. There was quite a contrast between that type of person and the smooth-skinned and flax-haired fellow who blew the saxophone in this performance. To be sure there were scenes from damn "Dear Old Dixie."

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As is usual, chief among the jokes are graveyard scenes or stories, card games and other games of chance, together with little acts of dishonesty, razors, pistols and policemen.

Something of beauty is brought out in the "St. Louis Blues" and the scenery which accompanies it. Possibly a better name for this song is "Sun Down Blues." The large group of performers make up a chorus, situated on the stage in the darkness, a perfect reproduction of a distant twilight scene. Indistinct in the darkness they swing their bodies in rhythm, in harmony, both of motion and song. It is a thing that might well be extended and really developed. That of course requires hard work, and a troupe of this sort is not out to do the kind of work. But, as I have said, the "St. Louis Blues," as performed by the "Blackbirds," is a thing of beauty.

Another good feature of "Blackbirds" is the dancing of the men. Rogers has had many good things to say about them, and just about all that he has said is true. The Perry boys and the other two individual stars among the men were all called back more than once.

The dancing and singing of the women is poor.

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All in all the "Blackbirds" in Paris is just another colored road show. It is doing more harm than good. It is giving to Paris a false idea of the typical American Negro. The southern white man has assumed the attitude of laughter toward the Negro. To him the Negro is a funny thing. When the southerner is not laughing at the Negro he is mad with him. The northerner in America, even until now, takes the Negro more seriously, although even he has assumed something of the attitude of the southerner. The danger in such shows as "Blackbirds" is that they will give generally to white people, even in Paris and elsewhere, the attitude of the southerner.

Crystal Springs, Miss., Meteor
Friday, July 19, 1929

NEGRO SHOWS SHOULD BE BARRED BY TOWN

On the night of July 11th an aggregation of negro show folks were presented to a fairly sized audience by F. S. Walcott's Rabbit Foot Co. The play presented was "The High Brown Follies of 1929." The Meteor editor did not attend the show and we cannot commend or criticize. Neither do we offer criticism to people who may have attended the show—that's their business. But we want to go on record as opposed to negro shows promoted by white (?) people being given permission to show in Crystal Springs. We have always been opposed to this kind of a show. We think the place for a show of this kind to be given is in Freedmantown, not up in the white residence dictrict. We will here state two instances during the short stay of the show (one afternoon and night) which alone will justify our position, as follows: We saw with our own eyes a negro man, a negro woman and a white (?) man, all three members of the show organization, disembark from a one-seated coupe automobile at the entrance of the tent on the afternoon before the show was presented that night. After the show, one of the chocolate colored damsel artresses had the nerve to walk boldly into a white cafe, seating herself on a stool and calling for a sandwich. The proprietor informed her quietly that only white people were served at his place. She looked indignant and "moved not a peg." The proprietor then "roared like a lion" and in terms which could not be misunderstood, and the "colored lady" moved as if touched by magic.

So, citizens of Crystal Springs, you see something could "get started" in and aldermen, for decency's sae, to this town by a one-night show of colored folks presented by white (?) folks. refuse a permit to negro shows in the future.
Let's prevail upon our board of mayor

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Troupes, etc.

Negro Pioneers In the Field Of Sound Movies

By RUBY BERKLEY GOODWIN
(Exclusively for the Illustrated Feature Section)

TO those of us who are constantly hoping for better things for the race the announcement of the all-colored sound movie drama, "Hallelujah," will be heralded with hearty applause. "Porgy," "The Emperor Jones" and such plays brought a new group of actors to the American stage and the Negro, before that practically restricted to musical comedy and vaudeville, came into his own as a legitimate actor.

The race will honor King Vidor director of the classic feature, "The Big Parade," who has opened gates of the screen drama to the Negro actor, just beginning to win real recognition on the stage.

This is the real significance of "Hallelujah," Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's great talking drama—the first of all Negro drama in the history of the screen.

Our actors, who have scored so heavily in the new film and have written a new page in screen history, have been gathered from here, there and everywhere. From Broadway shows, from vaudeville, from cotton fields, from school-rooms, they came. Some are veterans of the stage, some are mere novices at the art of entertainment and, for most of them, it is their first venture into the world of film art.

Victoria Spivey, noted "blues" singer, whose records are heard and imitated the country over, had never been on the stage, yet we learn that she is one of the cleverest actresses in the entire cast.

The old "Dad" in the picture is Harry Gray. He was born in slavery and is now nearly 90 years old. When freedom came, through the hand of Lincoln, he, like a vast number of the slaves. set out to prove himself worthy of the new sphere into which he was thrown. He has been itinerant preacher and editor, and has followed many other callings in his career. This is his first experience as an actor—but no one, watching him on the screen, could ever detect it.

Hundreds of actual cotton workers from along the Mississippi appear, both in the cotton field scenes and in the great baptismal service on the river, where total immersion "as is" is shown in an exact replica of such an affair.

The picture was made in the cotton plantations about Memphis, Tennessee, along the banks of the "Father of Waters," on Beale street in Memphis (made famous by W. C. Handy's "Beale Street Blues"), and at the studios at Culver City, where on the great sound stages the Negro spirituals and other songs were rendered by the famous Dixie Jubilee Singers; where Daniel Haynes, whose resonant bass was heard on Broadway in "Old Man River" in "The Show Boat," sang his solos, and where the dialogue was recorded for the interior scenes.

The hero, "Zeke," is played by Daniel Haynes, formerly of "Show Boat," "Rang Tang," understudy of Charles Gilpin, acclaimed by some critics as one of the greatest actors on the stage. Haynes has a remarkable background. He is a graduate of two universities, Morris Brown and Chicago. He started his career as a Baptist clergyman, then became a writer and finally, by accident, found himself in a stage role.

The heroine, Nina May McKenny, a beautiful brown, comes from New York's "Blackbirds" of 1928. Heretofore she had been a dancer, but she has proved herself to be an excellent emotional actress. She is only 16 years of age and is fired with the undaunted enthusiasm of youth. From present indications, she has a brilliant future.

William Fountaine came from vaudeville to play the villain; Fannie Belle DeKnight from a long career on the stage, in Belasco shows such as "Lulu Belle." Everett McGarrity was in a Memphis high school, and did school drama. He proved a "knockout" as the brother of the hero.

The three clever children are known in their home of Memphis as "Half Pint," "Gin Rickey" and "Eight Ball." They were picked up by Vidor while dancing for pennies in front of a Memphis hotel.

To quote King Vidor: "Every one of them is a natural actor. I could pick out untrained actors from among and get perfect performances. Acting seems to strike a responsive chord in the hearts of these people. In fact, they don't act, but literally live their characters. In the wake scenes and in the baptism the extras actually achieved a note of religious hysteria, under the spell of Haynes' voice, as he preached actual sermons to the crowds."

"You see, I am a clergyman—I had to really preach or it would have been irreverent," was the actor's remark afterwards.

Vidor never rehearsed them strenuously—in fact, he knew enough to the cotton workers, cast them in 'bits' let them do their own scenes and had his cameras pick up the portions he wanted. Hence the absolute naturalness of the whole story.

It is a simple tale—whether you came from Harlem or Yazoo Bottoms. It is the story of a young Negro who goes wrong. repents, and finds salvation. Its action ranges from the cotton fields to a Negro gambling den—a "salvation train" of colored evangelists—and a love story worked through it.

"There is a deep undercurrent of emotion in the race," says Vidor, "that brings to the screen an absolutely new type of drama in them. For instance, I have seen Haynes so unstrung in emotional scenes that he had to leave the set; and have seen crowds in actual hysteria under the lash of their emotions. It is this quality that we caught and that opens up a great new field for screen drama with these newcomers to the screen."

"We all felt," comments Haynes, "that our own success in the picture meant nothing, but that we were probably opening up a new field for those who are to follow us. So we really had a deep interest in the work. Perhaps, if it does what we hope, it will help the world to understand our race."

N. Y. Sun
APR 23 1929

AVON BARD'S BIRTHDAY

Memorial Theater Committee Reports on Fund.

Today is the 365th birthday anniversary of William Shakespeare. This occasion brings forth the announcement from the American Shakespeare Foundation, working in cooperation with the British committee to rebuild and endow the Shakespeare Memorial Theater at Stratford-on-Avon, that a total of $828,750 has been donated to the fund in the United States.

This sum includes $250,000 contributed by John D. Rockefeller, Jr., to the British committee and a similar amount given to the American committee. The total amount needed has been estimated at $2,500,000. The American Foundation pledged itself to raise $1,000,000, the balance to be raised in Great Britain and other countries.

A huge book, six feet high and four feet broad, records the names of American donors. The volume is to be placed in the Shakespeare Library at Stratford-on-Avon.

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People has promised to endow a chair in the new theater in honor of Ira Aldridge, a famous negro actor. The sum of $1,000 is being raised for this purpose. Many colleges are raising similar funds.

Elihu Root is honorary president of the American Foundation. Thomas W. Lamont is chairman of the advisory council and Otto H. Kahn is treasurer. Percy S. Bullen is secretary of the organization.

Londoners Enjoy Negro Lore.

Southerners have taken a justifiable pride in the notable success of *Porgy*, DuBose Heywood's fine play based on the life of the Charleston waterside Negroes. Its excellent production by the New York Theatre Guild gave pleasure to thousands of the most discriminating theatre goers in the United States and this success brought the play into the notice of English producers. So it has recently been given in London and was received by English spectators with marked approval. A special cabled story to the New York *Herald Tribune* quotes several London critics in the following terms:

Alan Parsons, writing in the *Daily Mail*, says "the much overworked word 'sensational' may be applied to it. It is a masterpiece of lighting and production."

The *Daily Telegraph* calls the play "another Cochran success, giving us a glimpse of another world, full of sound, color and primitive emotions." The *Daily Chronicle* says it is a "magnificent production, a superb melodrama of melodramatic people and grippingly, terribly human."

The *Daily News* says "it should attract all London, this wonderful stage picture full of color, humor and pathos. It gives in a series of flashes a vivid representation of a strange and picturesque phase of life."

The *Morning Post* exemplifying its ultra-conservative attitude even in dramatic criticism says "it is a great 'show'—that is the beginning and the end."

It is a significant fact that the English have always been sympathetic toward the best American delineations of Negro life. From the first appearance of the *Uncle Remus* stories, the old Negro, the "little boy" and the "creeturs" had thousands of admirers in England, and before the passage of the international copyright law there were published in England several pirated editions of the stories as well as a pirated edition of *Free Joe*. Later on, Joel Chandler Harris's publishers sold the English rights on many of his books to leading publishers of Edinburgh and London. These firms printed his books in beautiful editions, the *Uncle Remus* stories being excellently illustrated by the famous delineator of animals, J. A. Shepard, as well as by Carton Moorepark, a brilliant English etcher and portraitist who now lives in this country.

English people of the cultivated classes have always manifested an interest in life and customs of the Southern plantations and their sympathies during the Civil War were largely with the Souhtern side. It was only natural that the paternalism of the plantation system should have appealed to the English aristocracy and higher classes, and the exotic quality of plantation romance would naturally make an appeal to sophisticated people whose own social life had moved far away from the glamor of primal life.

We have often wondered how English admirers of Negro lore managed to understand the dialect. If that of the middle Georgia Negro, as exemplified in *Uncle Remus*, was hard for them to take in, how much more so would be the lingo of the "salt-water" Negro, as exemplified in DuBose Heywood's and Julia Peterkin's Negroes. Of course the dialect of the "black-face" impersonator, who has been so popular in London Music Halls for the past decade, is quite another thing, being, as it is, a hybrid of artificial quality which the "artist" who is employing it modifies to meet his audiences.

We have noticed that unfamiliarity with Negro dialect does not stand in the way of a child's enjoyment of the *Uncle Remus* stories in the least. We have seen little boys and girls in Connecticut, Pennsylvania and Chicago, who have never seen Southern Negroes or heard uttered a word of genuine Negro dialect, take the utmost pleasure in the "Tar Baby" story and all the other tales of the old plantation as told by a Southerner. The youngsters managed to get at the story and the strange sound of the words seemed to have a fascination for them. Maybe it is the same with our English cousins

FIRST NEGRO THEATRE IN NEW YORK IN 1821, SAYS NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

NEW YORK.—Although Ira Aldrich was a great colored actor, playing Othello in England as early as 1789, the first attempt to establish a Negro theatre in New York came in 1821, writes C. A Leonard in the New York Herald Tribune.

The article, summarized by the N. A. A. C. P., says that one Hewlett was star of this earliest Negro troupe in New York, which was located in the African Grove at Mercer and Bleecker streets.

Next came the Hyar sisters who flourished about 1870 in repertory. In 1897, Lew Payton attempted an all-colored version of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

The beginning of the present vogue of Negro players and plays began between 1901 and 1904, says Mr. Leonard, with the efforts of the brothers Salem Whitney and J. Homer Tutt, who wrote and produced "The Ex-President of Liberia," and then "Black Patti's Troubadours." Jed Green founded the Pekin Stock company in Chicago which gave first opportunity to such players as Charles Gilpin, Miller and Lyles, Lieut. Tim Brynn, Ernest Hogan, and others.

In the musical field Mr. Leonard speaks of Bert Williams and George Walker anticipating "Shuffle Along."

The total number of Negro theatres, Mr Leonard says, is 400, most of them alternating between musical and dramatic stock.

EVERY EVENING
WILMINGTON, DEL.

APR 18 1929

THE NEGRO IN THE DRAMA.

The London triumph of "Porgy," a drama depicting the life of the American Negro and presented by men and women of the race, will bring much satisfaction to the colored leaders of this country. At the end of a recent performance, it is reported, by cable, the company was cheered and responded to 11 curtain calls, which may be taken as a tribute to both play and players. It is also stated that the audience included the socially elect and the habitual first nighter of the British metropolis, and that the critics were unstinted in their praise of both the actors and the drama.

Other recent performances by members of the race in this country have also drawn large and appreciative throngs that packed theatres, a circumstance that shows the advancement of the race into the realms of dramatic art. There, of course, have been other Negroes who have won distinction on the stage, but they may have been flashes of individual genius, rather than racial advancement. London's approval, usually a correct gauge of dramatic merit, goes to prove that with education and training the Negro can find place readily in the higher vocations.

To be sure this has been already asserted by friends and leaders of the race, but the approbation of London where there is little race prejudice, confirms this claim as an established fact.

Theatres and Performers — Big and Little

By A. N. P.

second installment of a history of the Negro in the theatre in America, compiled and written by Mr. Leonard. This history is not complete and, inasmuch as it represents in great part the writing down of facts that exist vaguely and variously in the minds of persons who remember "way back when," some of the facts reproduced in this narrative may differ from the facts as remembered by some others. But the Associated Negro Press believes that with the co-operation of Mr. Leonard it is performing a service in making available this much of a fairly authentic written picture of the Negro's histrionic activities. Mr. Leonard is associated with the all-Negro play, "Harlem," which is now showing both in New York and Chicago.

Negro Histrionism in U. S.

By C. A. Leonard.

INSTALLMENT II.

(Continued From Last Week)

ED. GREEN was responsible for the first dramatic movement recorded for the North. He founded the Pekin Stock Company in Chicago. The group got its name from the old Pekin Theatre, which is now converted into one of those ineffectual Chicago police stations. Among those who got their start with the "Pekinese" are Charles Gilpin, Miller and Lyles, Lieut. Tim Bryamn, J Francis Mores, Pearl White (not the former serial film star), Ernest Hogan, Lawrence Chenault, William Cook, Joe Jordan, Jessie Ship, and Lotta Grady. All are now up in the world of Negro thespians.

Another stock company was founded almost simultaneously at the Indiana Theatre in Chicago. Charles Moore was its chief attraction, and he performed colored versions of such plays as "My Lady's Garter" and "The Voice in the Dark." Things there were more or less uneventful, since the growth of the Negro theatre is marked mainly by the development of its stars. Thus nothing was heard of the Indiana Theatre again until 1909, when Susie Sutton came to the fore in "The Return of Eve." The Pekin, however, continued as the really enterprising unit. It adventured with new plays and players prodigally. In 1908, for instance, it made history with the advent of Clarence Muse in "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and in "Hearts of Dixie"—the stage play, not the picture.

Then, along about 1912, Philadelphia's colored theatrical sector was heard from. Evelyn Ellis, who played one of the leads in "Porgy," beguiled the colored Quakers with "Goat Alley." But Chicago continued in the dramatic lead up to and including 1916, when the Pekin presented Cleo Desmond and Andrew Bishop (the same Bishop who is now playing Kid Vamp in the Chicago company of Harlem) in "Parlor, Bedroom, and Bath," and Shirlette Freeman in "The Brute." A year later Andrew Bishop was instrumental in starting a colored dramatic company at the Howard Theatre in Washington, D. C., playing "The Servant in the House."

In 1917 an actress by the name of Anita Bush, fired with the success of her brethren in Chicago, Philadelphia, and Washington, started a playlet company at the Lincoln Theatre. New York being the goal of all actors, white or black, Miss Bush had no difficulty attracting the best of her tribe from other cities. When they were banded together, dissension apparently arose within the ranks, and so Charles Gilpin moved his compatriots over to the Lafayette Theatre and founded the now famous Lafayette Players. The membership listed those who have since come to be regarded as the dramatic stars of the Negro acting profession—Charles Gilpin, Abbie Mitchell, Laura Bowman, Clarence Muse, Cleo Desmond, Ida Anderson, Andrew Bishop, Sidney Kirkpatrick, Evelyn Ellis, Charles Olden, A. B. DeComathiere, Jack Carter, and Frank Wilson. Those among them who later became famous for their characterizations in ofay audiences is Rose McClendon pin, who was seen in "Abraham Lincoln," "The Emperor Jones," and "White Mule," and Abbie Mitchell in "Coquette' and "Porgy." Another colored actress to win favor among ofay audiences is Rose McClendon whose performances in "Porgy," "Earth," and "In Abraham's Bosom" were tantamount to stardom.

The foregoing by no means exhausts the list of present-day Negro tragedians, nor the far-flung corners of the native heath whence they first reached hungrily for the actinic rays of the limelight. In 1917 Boston was the scene of the attempts of Sterling Wright to make off with the laurels of his forerunner, Ira Aldridge. His "Othello" apparently took the Bostonians by storm, for the Lafayette Players invited him down to New York, and he gave a series of performances here. And in 1918, risen out of comparative obscurity, there were Emily Hapgood's Colored Players, who were so compelling a troupe that Robert Edmund Jones staged one of their productions at the Garrick Theatre. "Simon the Cyrinian." This was probably the first instance of a colored company holding the stage in the vicinity and glare of the Broadway lights.

Neither can the humble though distorted efforts of The Attucks be overlooked as contributory to the development of Negro historionism in America. The Attucks flourished in Norfolk, Va., in 1917. Most of the colored theatres in the country, incidentally, are named Attucks Theatre, so-called in tribute to Crispus Attucks, a Negro whose memory is perpetuated historically by a statue in the Boston Commons. Attucks was reported to be an entertainer in his own small way, and in the riot against the British in 1775 he was shot down by the Redcoats, a circumstance which made him the first human killed in defense of this country. The more facetious members of the "Harlem" company have another theory. They are inclined to think that he had performed for the British the day before, and that the British, upon recognizing him in the front ranks of the rioters, instantly revenged themselves. And we thought the Revolution was precipitated by the breaking up of a tea party!

(Continued Next Week)

STATE
COLUMBIA, S. C.

MAY 13 1929

"Porgy" Ends Short London Run.

Thousands of American well-wishers in the great talent of DuBose Heyward will regret to learn that his fine Negro play, "Porgy," is about to end its rather brief run in London.

The little drama, based on the best work, by far, that its author has yet done, was acclaimed on its first showing in England, and seemed to have ahead of it a long and successful run. But hardly were the congratulations for his success received by the author than the attendance began falling away, until now it has reached the point where it ceases to pay, and is to be withdrawn, after a run of six weeks. Only the first two weeks proved profitable.

A dispatch from its London bureau to the New York Herald-Tribune says:

"Heyward's play of Negro life in Charleston, S. C., has not repeated its New York success in London, despite the general enthusiasm of the critics here. It has failed somehow to capture the popular imagination and is to be withdrawn May 25 after a run of about six weeks. For the first fortnight it played to capacity but since then the bookings have steadily decreased."

The producer who arranged for the Theater Guild production in London says that, despite the failure and disappointment, "I am prouder to have presented 'Porgy' to London than of anything else in my career."

It seemed, however, almost certain that "Porgy" as a play was not the sort of thing that the English would long applaud. It is too innate, intimate, local for a wide appeal; and it is questionable if the Britishers either understood or cared for its quaint dialect and quainter, but not "universal" or broad characters.

It is a pity, for the locale of "Porgy" is too narrow to give the fine creation of its story and characters due appreciation. But this is one of the penalties that must be accepted by writers of dialectal and parochial stories, and, most particularly, dialectal and parochial plays.

Theatrical - 1929
Individual Troupes, etc.

Mr. Leigh Whipper

Who Went to London and Lived for a While With Great Minds, Past and Present

—By R. I. D.—

THE voice of the very efficient crabman in "Porgy" came flaoting over the wires to us in the silence of a beautiful Long Island morning. Mr. Whipper had just returned from England and he wanted to know could he come by the office of this paper to see us. We refused Mr. Whipper's request, because we have known Mr. Whipper for many years Once we were associated with him when the skies were downcast and when they threatened to become black it was a pleasure to tell Mr. Whipper that if it rained we would not mind as long as we were with him.

But we did inform Mr. Whipper in no uncertain terms to remain at his domicile, and there we found him in one of Mr. Rockefeller's apartments, the picture of peace and contentment. Of course, this is nothing to wonder over. One of God's own creatures, to whom Mr. Whipper always refers as "Lil," presides over the habitation. Together they have seen the sun rise and set for many years and, be it said to the credit of Mr. Whipper, that the influence of home and Mrs. Whipper has had its place in the scheme of things which forces us to depart from hackneyed terms in praise of that inspiration which has kept Mr. Whipper a poet at soul. And what can we say? Words fail us.

The influence of home and its wholesome atmosphere will be borne out in this tale of the gentleman of whom we write today. Mr. Whipper, as you know, or should know, is a Negro performer doing one of the best little things of art in "Porgy." Posshibly you have seen him as master of ceremonies at some of the shows staged by the dramatic editor of this paper in behalf of local institutions. Like hundreds of other performers, Mr. Whipper went to Europe recently; but, unlike hundreds of other performers, Mr. Whipper returned to the United States with a mind refreshed and with renewed inspiration.

And this because Mr. Whipper is above the average in intelligence, a great reader and a lover of the better things in life. Mr. Whipper, instead of following the usual form as noted among many of our performers, accompanied by Mrs. Whipper, had hardly anchored in London before he stood before the historic places, marveling at the beauty and art of the Old World, drinking freely at the founts which have given inspiration to Albion to conquer the world and at the same time bringing to civilization a better realization of those things which the Pilgrim Fathers brought to America to hand down to the chosen few.

Mr. Whipper, if your memory serves you right, appeared as Svengali some years ago, and he returned to the character for a while on that day when the writer allowed himself to be a willing subject, comfortably reclining in a most comfortable chair while Mr. Whipper, in imagination, returned to the scenes of the Old Curiosity Shop, Westminster Abbey, Buckingham Palace, the monument to Edith Cavell, Sunwich Port, the British Museum and a host of others too numerous to mention. Mr. Whipper enjoyed seeing the Cold Stream Guards (shade of Captain Harry Graham, we remember the time he married Ethel Barrymore), the Horse Guards, the Grenadier Guards and the Prince of Wales accepting the salute to the colors on the day they mounted guard when Mr. Whipper had the good fortune to be present. And, if we are not mistaken, Mr. Whipper also had the opportunity of hearing a real band on the same occasion. You know, musicians the world over admit that, on such an occasion, you have the pleasure of hearing real military music.

The thought now intrudes that we have done Mr. Whipper an injustice in baring his soul to his friends and enemies. Many among the performers will rise up and remark that they, too, saw the same things as Mr. Whipper. Yeh, perhaps they did, but they did not see these things with the eyes of Mr. Whipper. He saw them with thoughts that came from the soul of a poet through the eyes of an artist. To us Mr. Whipper's wealth is as great as the pounds, shillings and pence brought back by many, and much greater than that of many, for wherever God casts him when the sun sinks in the golden west he has but to close his eyes and bring back scenes he will cherish more than misers' gold. Possibly Mr. Whipper will remember that it was in a tavern made famous by some of the world's greatest writers that such a personage as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle did remind us in a note that afterwards went into "The Sign of the Four" that there is such a thing as seeing without observing. The others possibly saw, but Mr. Whipper saw and observed.

Of course, the fact that Mr. Whipper has traveled far with a little album which holds the signature of many names prominent in the Old and New Worlds meant a little more to us when we saw what Hannen Swaffer of the Daily Express of London had to say above his signature. And, if we have taken advantage of Svengali by reciting these things when we came to and were forced to bring to a close a few of the happiest hours we have spent in the company of a performer, Mr. Whipper will, we hope, forgive us for taking advantage of the opportunity to use him as one of the outstanding Negro performers to visit the Old World. His recitation was devoid of the stamp of the person trying to impress us with the fact that he had seen many places and was desirous of the world knowing about it. The man was simply living over with ecstacy that which stirred within him as he brought to realization pent-up desires which have slumbered in his breast even at that time so far away when he said to us: "Boy, I am going abroad some day!" If Mr. Whipper can recall a certain afternoon in company with the writer, the late Sam Corker, Alex Rogers and Jesse Shipp he will recall the occasion that brought forth the exclamation from him.

Anent "All God's Chillun"

The London production of "All God's Chillun," by Eugene O'Neill, did not stay for the four weeks as scheduled, but closed after the third week.

The following is a part of a letter sent to America by the sister of a Member of Parliament:

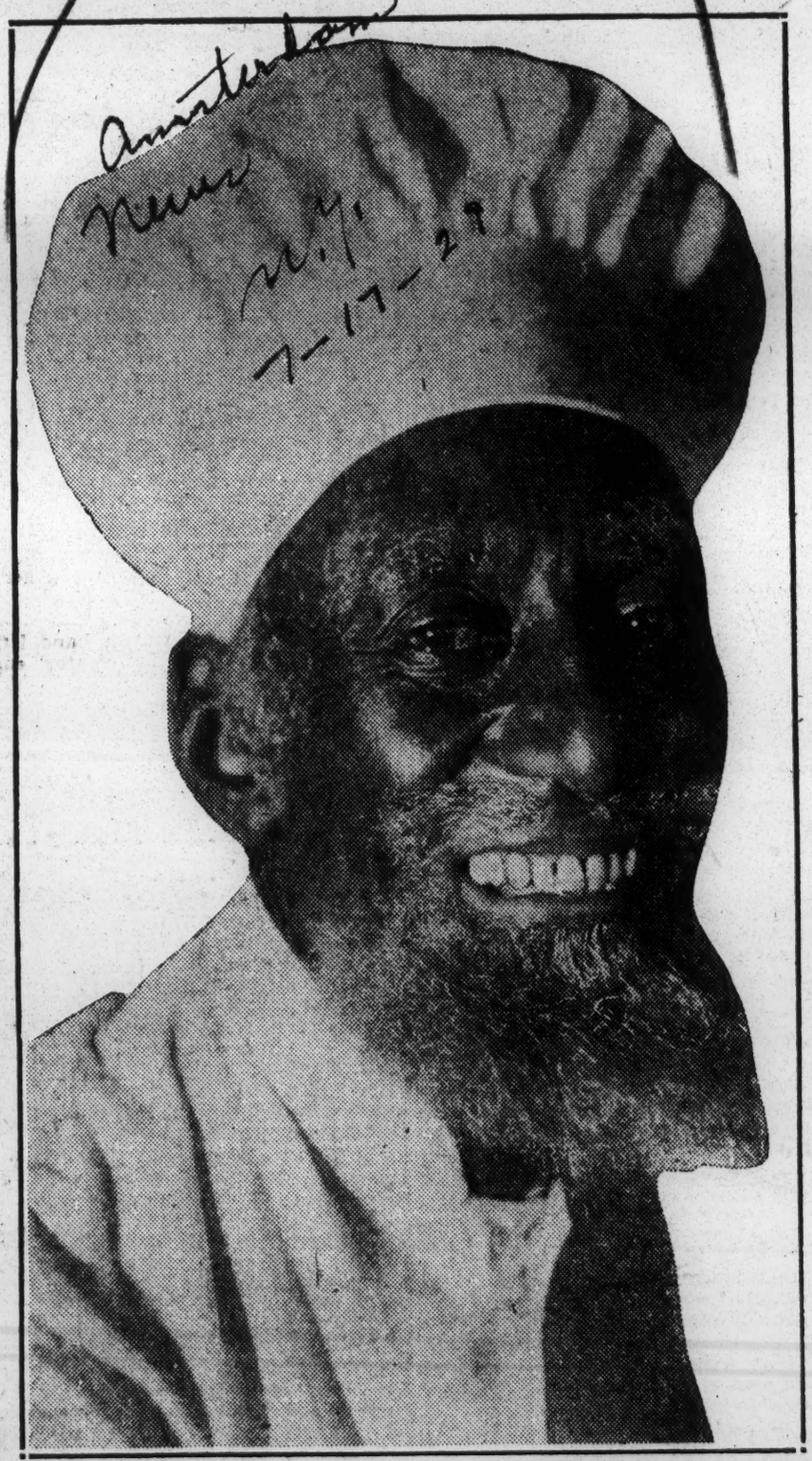
"I went to see 'All God's Chillun Got Wings' and my personal opinion of it is that it is a propaganda play of the worst kind, and Eugene O'Neill has written a play which to my mind is exaggerated out of all proportion. For instance, he makes a white girl born on the east side of New York so sensitive to the shame of marrying a cultured, educated Negro, a man at that time studying to pass the bar examination. Yet this same white girl's feelings are not so sensitive when she becomes the cast-off mistress and mother of a white man's child and he of the lowest type—a boxer of low mentality.

"I cannot for the life of me see anything consistent in such a plot.

"I consider myself sensitive as most women and think I might be described as educated and I hope a lady; but I can't say that I feel any sort of repulsion for any of my colored friends, and I have many.

"I feel very strongly that a play of that sort is the wrong kind of play to bring to England, where that color feeling does not exist, and ought not to be introduced. We English people are very insular and do not like our girls to marry foreigners—French, German or Italian—and the objection to marrying a colored man just comes under that heading, and no more."

Returns With New Laurels



MR. LEIGH WHIPPER, Who Will Again Be Seen in His Old Role of Master of Ceremonies Sunday, Midnight of July 28, Is Shown Above in His Character as the Crabman in "Porgy." He Was Singled Out for Special Mention by the Critics While Appearing With the Show in London, England.

A Lawyer Turns Vitaphone Artist

Afro-American 7-20-29 Baltimore Md

Lawyer, singer, vaudeville star, theatre manager and dramatist—he tried them all. He likes the movie game best.

This Is the Story of How a Brilliant Baltimore Lad After Preparing for Law, Discovered that the Charms of the Screen Were Superior to those of Blackstone and Webster.

By Ruby Berkley Goodwin

Prepared Exclusively for The Illustrated Feature Section.

"Hearts in Dixie" Star

With an enviable national reputation as one of the foremost artists of the race, Clarence Muse is now being seen and heard the world over as Nappus, in "Hearts in Dixie." The reactions of the race to this epic of reconstruction days will be varied, but it must be admitted that it is a true portrayal of that time.

It cannot be called a drama, because of its insufficient plot. But it is an epic of Negro life and should be regarded as such. It has been called by critics "The Plantation Opera" and is considered in picture circles the most important gesture the industry has made in years.

Clarence Muse, the Nappus of the story is a veteran stage artist, and will tell in his own words the story of his earlier achievements and his future hopes:

Early Ambition to Be a Lawyer

"I was born in Baltimore. I received my early educational training there. After completing high school, I entered the Dickerson School of Law in Carlisle, Penn., and later took a post graduate course in law at the University of Pennsylvania.

"My early ambition was to be a lawyer—a Blackstone or a Webster winning out over my opponents by oratory and legal knowledge."

Muse is a Phi Beta Sigma man of the Alpha Chapter, Washington, D.C.

"My earlier dreams of wealth and prominence, through my law career, I abandoned and took up singing. I knew hat a Negro would have a fairer field in this line of endeavor. The public believed in the Negro's voice; whereas, at that time, it did not think of him as a possessor of high intelligence.

Was a Member of One of the Country's Finest Quartets

"I became a member of a quartet known as "The Royal Poincians Four." Our quartet entertained at Palm Beach for many of the country's wealthiest people. After this engagement, I joined a colored stock dramatic company and toured the South. Eventually I found myself in vaudeville, billed under the act of The Muses,' then later 'Chappelle and Muse.'"

Press Loud in Praise of Muse's Ability

Muse claims no credit for any of his work. His many scrapbooks are filled from cover to cover with press reports speaking in a superlative way of his ability as an actor, producer and dramatist.

"I abandoned vaudeville," he continued, "to become a theatre manager in Kansas City, but after a short while the lure of the stage intrigued me again, so I went to New York and joined the notable Lafayette Players."

Is Master of the Role of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde."

For months Muse played to capacity houses. At present he is one of the few actors who enact the entire drama of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" without the aid of an understudy.

This role, besides being extremely exacting, offers a wider range in dramatic acting than that of any other stage drama—one man who is at one time noble, kind, thoughtful and a master scientist; at another time he is a fiend incarnate, capable of committing the mose heinous crimes.

Is Master of the Role of "Dr.

Muse is perfect in this role. His deep vibrant voices thrills you to the depth of your being as he tells Agnes of his love for her—the half-animal snarl and the fiendish laughter of terror. The lightning-like changes drug-crazed Hyde fills your soul with. Muse effects are startling, and his capacity as a make-up artist may be judged when one learns that he has played as many as five different roles in this drama at one performance.

His Ability Wins a Gold Watch

For enacting this superb role, Muse was presented with a beautiful gold watch by Mr. Schiffman, an authority in New York dramatic circles.

On one occasion a reporter said "In the portrayal of Hamlet, 'the mantle of Booth' has been handed down to Muse. He runs the gauntlet of human emotions."

As a Character Actor, Muse Is in a Class by Himself

Muse loves to think of his role in the Hunchback of Notre Dame.

"No," he told me, "I didn't play the lead in that show; but read this." He pointed to a clipping and I read—"Muse as a character actor is in a class by himself. He stole the act."

"Leaving the Lafayette Players I became a producer of floor shows and presentations in de luxe picture houses.

"I produced and staged a version of the famous Mary Garden opera 'Thais,' with an all-colored cast and chorus. One hundred and ninety people were used in the production. I played the role of Damiel.

Mary Garden Compliments for Achievement

"O our opening night, I received a cablegram from Mary Garden, who was in Europe, complimenting me upon the achievement. Later I produced 'Miss Bandana' and 'Charleston Dandies.' I hate vulgarity, and I received much praise because my shows were clean and moral."

Muse Possesses a Remarkable Memory

Mr. Muse has a unique way of memorizing.

"I never attempt to commit lines until I have a mental picture of the entire play. When I receive the play, I read it over two or three times. After my second rehearsal, I know my lines perfectly. I have used this method in committing a different play each week for as many as twenty-six consecutive weeks."

Says Judging in Beauty Contest Was Most Trying Experience

"I suppose the stage has brought many trying experiences to you," I said.

"Well yes," he agreed, "but do you know that one of the most trying experiences I ever had was judging a beauty contest. The contestants were angry. The sponsors disagreed. I bore the brunt of everybody's fury simply because we disagreed on awarding the prizes.

Hard to Find a Negro Girl with Beautiful Face, Figure, and Grace

"Most people do not realize that beauty is judged from three standpoints: beauty of face, beauty of form, and grace. It is easy to find a Negro girl with a beautiful face, but the other two requisites are harder to find.

"I believe that girls who intend to enter beauty contests should train for the contest as studiously as an athlete trains for a race. They should be taught posture and how to correct slight defects, but this is the story of to crop out in a bathing suit."

Can Make-up to fill Role of Caucasian

Muse is a typical Negro, very dark and a trifle heavy. Yet in some of his characterizations he makes up to resemble a Caucasian, even adopting

Audience Breaks Into Furor

" T's Muse! That's Muse!' they I bought everything I had in the audience took up the and for hours I would lock myself in and try these different solutions over and over again. At last one day my efforts were rewarded. I confided in no one, but walked prolonged applause. At the end of eleven minutes there was the audience became quiet night, as I received my cue, I walked out on the stage and paused. The members of the company looked at each other then back to me. They were mystified.

Theatrical - 1929
Individual Troupes, etc.

LEW LESLIE'S NEW STAR

HARRIET CALLOWAY

No more important announcement of the current season will occu than that of Lew Leslie's sensational musical hit, "Blackbirds," which began a one-week engagement at the Windsor theatre in the Bronx or Monday, September 2.

Coming as it does after a fifteen months' run at the Eltinge theatre on Forty-second street, this fast-stepping organization of pepy singers and dancers and comedians, will be presented here with all the several novelties that acclaimed it the greatest theatrical presentation of its kind that has yet been given to the American theatre-going public.

Harriet Calloway, who Lew Leslie claims has a world of natural ability, heads the unusual cast of players, which includes some of the greatest artists of the race. Hilda Perlena, the prima donna, will carry the musical nts of the revue, while the comedy will be cared for by Henry "Gang" Jines, Derby Wilson, Joyner and Foster, Sandy Burns and several others.

Worthy and Thompson, those boys with the expressive feet, will perform their intricate step dancing and will be ably supported by Aarons Palmer, Bamboo McCarver and Freddie Taylor.

The Cecil Mack choir, the famous Plantation [illegible] and the Blackbird Beauty Chorus are still component parts of a performance that for sheer delight-giving qualities and complete satisfaction, has been conceded by press and public to be the premiere theatrical fare of the year.

Shortly after the local engagement, this extraordinary aggregation of youth, vigor and musical vitality, will head its way to Chicago where it goes for an indefinite run.

Europe Cool Toward Race Offerings this Season

"Blackbirds" Reception Mild in Paris; "Porgy" Closed in London After Short Run

Afro-American 6-22-29 Baltimore, Md

PARIS.—The European reception of American Negro offerings is the most doubtful in theatrical history this season, and in spite of the dash and syncopation of Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds," which opened Friday at Moulin Rogue, its future hangs in the balance.

This luke-warm reception follows closely upon the positive thumbs-down attitude of the English on "Porgy," which was forced to close after a short run. Both vehicles enjoyed long and successful stays on Broadway and producers are at a loss to account for the attitude encountered both in the Iles and on the Continent.

Lack of Understanding

London correspondents state that the English theatregoers failed to understand or sympathize with the inhabitants of "Catfish Row" as depicted in "Porgy." Their ignorance of American customs relative to Negro life also accounted for their failure to warm up to the Dixie play.

"Blackbirds" is striking an almost similar difficulty in that the show is done entirely in English, and a large portion fails to register with the natives. The audiences leave the theatre puzzled. Hot dancing and good singing may hold the offering for the ten weeks it is booked. Insiders are not enthusiastic over the engagement.

"God's Chillun" Opens

While "Porgy" failed to take, the Theatre Guild has uncorked another play from its repertoire in "All God's Chillun Got Wings," which is appearing at the Court Theatre.

Frank Wilson, who took the lead in "Porgy," will be starred in this offering, supported by many of the cast who were imported for the former presentation.

Baker (Mr. Baker is president of the largest bank in America), "Lucky Roberts and his colored musicians seem to be indispensable to hostesses this season." And later describing another of the more exclusive affairs given by St. Christopher's Guild, this publication the criterion of the elite, said "dinner was served by Sherry at small tables on the lower deck, while the inimitable Lucky Roberts and his dark faced brethren played. At one point in the evening Lucky's young nephew, "Bunny," a diminutive black child about two feet high, did an agile tap dance. There was shower of nickels, dimes and quarters but "Bunny" paid scant attention, dancing back to his uncle, with rolling eyes until dollar bills began to flutter.

What Lucky Roberts, who long has been the purveyor of entertainment for the most ritzy folks in town, is doing is being done on a lesser scale by the many fine bands and orchestras of the town. There is not perhaps the organization and solidity there is needed to hold the advantage gained, but right now colored enteartainers are "doing well."

COLORED PLAYERS MAKE GOTHAM HIT; WANTED BY WHITES

New York City.—(ANP)—The vogue for colored entertainers at New York's smartest parties continues. The nouveau rich may temporize with white musicians, but the real "400," as "Vogue," the fashionable magazine says in its July 20 issue, speaking of a boating party given by Geo.

"Blackbirds" Number 2 in Brooklyn; "Great Day" and "Harlem" to Open in Boston

By MAURICE DANCER

New York, Aug. 28.—With Labor day near there are many glad faces among the lot of performers around Seventh Ave. Now the season is about to open after being practically closed all summer and several hundred performers are being called to rehearsals, some of the productions reopening to go on tour and many new acts are being formed.

The first to open was Bud Harris' new act for the Keith-Orpheum circuit that opened last week at the Regent, with Alex Lovejoy, Gilbert Holland, Ali Brothers, Lew Keane and Leonard Ruffin, Nettie Hayes, Octavia Sumler and eight dancing girls.

Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds" No. 2 company that closed a few weeks ago at the Eltinge theater after replacing the No. 1 company opened Monday at Worba's, Brooklyn, to begin its tour of the West. This revue, starring the lovely Harriett Calloway, will have about the same cast except a few changes. Sandy Burns and Gang Jines replacing Hamtree Harrington and Emmett Anthony and Hilda Perline will replace Jessie Zackery. The tap dancing sensation, "Derby" and Billie Yarbo, dancing comedienne, have also been added to the cast.

Ziegfeld's "Showboat" that ran for more than a year on Broadway at the Ziegfeld theater and stood them up for 10 weeks in Boston will also go on tour with the same cast that played New York city, which included Jules Bledsoe as "Ole Man River"; J. Louis Johnson, about 30 jubilee singers and 12 dancing girls. "Showboat" opens in Newark, N. J. the early part of September.

Vincent Youmans' "Great Day" is now reheasing and opens in Boston Sept. 2, for a run before returning to Broadway to the Cosmopolitan theater. Its cast will include Miller and Lyles, comedians; Louis Deppe and the choir of jubilee singers and the "Two Black Dots."

After being closed all summer because of some difficulties with the actors over their salaries, "Harlem," the much discussed play of New York's sepia sector, is now recasting and plans to reopen in Boston about Oct. 7 with some 60 actors.

Jazz Regiment"

S. H. Grisman's "Jazz Regiment" that never reached Broadway, will re-open in the next few weeks with nearly 75 in their cast headed by John Mason, Dutsy Fletcher, Chappell and Stinnette and Gertrude Saunders.

Dewey Wineglass is busy rehearsing a new act for Ida Chadwick, formerly a feature with George White's "Scandals." Other than Miss Chadwick, the act will be all-Colored. Lucky Roberts and Alex Rogers are doing the music.

"Ebony Scandals," a Keith-Orpheum act that has made quite a reputation for itself in and around New York city, will soon leave for the West coast. This act includes Mae Barnes and Lavenia Mack, Louis Simms and Buster Bowie and several others.

"HOT CHOCOLATES," an all-colored musical show; music by Thomas Waller and Harry Brooks; lyrics by Andy Razaf; staged by Leonard; presented by Connie and George Immerman in the Hudson Theatre.

With Baby Cox, Edith Wilson, "Jazz-Lips" Richardson, Louise Cook, Eddie Green, Billy Higgins, Billy Maxey, Jimmie Baskette, Margaret Simms, Paul Bass, Wooding's Jubilee Singers, Le Roy Smith and his orchestra, Sixteen Hot Chocolate Drops and the Eight Bon-Bon Buddies.

A FAST-MOVING NEGRO SHOW

The latest addition to the long string of Negro shows, "Hot Chocolates," which came to the Hudson Theatre last night, proves to be a colorful, fast-moving, spirited, and expert display of Afric accomplishments, especially in the dancing line. These young bloods of Harlem can dance, and they do, with an immense amount of energy and willingness.

Most of the performers in the show also are on the entertainment staff in Connie's Inn, a Harlem night club, and after the curtain rings down on their Broadway performance they go uptown and do most of it all over again. If they always pour as much energy into their work in the theatre as they did last night, I cannot for the life of me see how they can do anything more uptown than stagger across the floor. But it seems that they do.

The show in the Hudson does not go in for music very heavily. There is a song called "Ain't Misbehavin'," on which much reliance is placed. Almost everybody on the show sings it at one time or another, and as there are a good many in the show the song gets sung pretty often. It is tuneful and pleasant, and I should feel like giving everybody a great deal of credit for it if it only were not so strikingly reminiscent of something I seem to remember from a year or so ago. Never mind what.

What the show does go in for, and perfectly grandly, is dancing. On the stage they do practically every known kind of dance that ordinary mortals could not even think of trying to do. The girls' chorus is pretty and well trained and puts its heart and soul into its work. But it has to defer before the marvellously rhythmic clogging of a team of eight-young men who seem to be the answer to the question: Where do the young street-corner dancers of Harlem go?

Against the background of these two choruses glide three performers who really make the show. First of all is one "Jazz-lips" Richardson, a powerful man with a wild gleam in his eye, who comes out alone and, perfectly calmly, almost without visible effort, does an utterly unbelievable acrobatic dance. I have not seen anything more rhythmically gymnastic. Last night he literally stopped the show. Then there is a lithe, crazy, little person known as Baby Cox, who insists on singing pathetic songs slightly off key, and then suddenly begins to caper for all the world like a monkey on a stick. And finally there is one Louise Cook, a lady made entirely of rubber, who while representing the Goddess of Rain, does just such a dance as grandfather used to sneak off and see at the county fair.

The whole show has pace and enthusiasm and enough talent to make it the best Negro revue since "Blackbirds." There are even one or two decently funny sketches, and the lapses from good taste are few. And, by the way, the report that the show was postponed from last Monday so the cast could have their gold teeth out is a base canard.

F. P. DUNNE JR.

"HARLEM" KNOCKED

(By The Associated Negro Press)

As this is written, "Harlem", that colorful drama of a phase of the life which New York Negroes lead, is putting in its last days in Chicago. The play was written by Wallace Thurman, a young colored man, and in collaboration with William Jourdan Rapp, white, it was prepared for the theater. It opened in New York during the winter and had reasonable success, the New York company closing only after repeated misunderstandings between the members of the colored cast who felt they were underpaid, and the producer, Edward Blatt, had grown to such proportions that Blatt threw up his hands in disgust and quit.

The early favor with New York, or Broadway, view the production was sufficient to inspire the men behind it to put a second company in training which opened in Detroit and went afterwards to Chicago. This company with Andrew Bishop, Alston Burleigh, and a young lady find, Vivian Barber, was said to have been superior to the original players. It did commendable business at the large Majestic Theater in the Windy City.

"Harlem's" Classifications

"Harlem" belongs in the class of plays whose chief attraction has been their approach toward a sort of coarseness that was on the borderline of indecency. It was of the "Diamond Lil"—"Frankie-and-Johnnie", "Jarnegan" type. When it reached Chicago, one critic ecstatically wrote that it was so bad that it made "Diamond Lil" look clean, which was not merely exaggeration, but untruth. There have been quite a few white productions that were coarser than "Harlem."

Play Is Toned Down

One of these, "Frankie and Johnnie" was closed by the Chicago police who apparently were asleep throughout the prosperous run of "Diamond Lil." Soon after the denizens of the law got on the trail of that show and cut its wind off, the protecting arm was reached out after "Harlem," and the producer was informed that he would have to close up shop. The police commissioner reported that he had received numerous objections to the show in letters. The production was later expunged of some of its worst lines and the dancing was toned down to hte point were it was permitted to continue, but the dirty work had been done, and it is now preparing to leave.

Negroes Chief Objectors

It is interesting to note that the chief complaints against "Harlem" came from Negroes. They did not attend the show in any great numbers, but did plenty of protesting because, as they had heard, the drama was a reflection upon the Negro. One of the principal persons who had to bear the brunt of embarrassment, cause by these attacks, was the affable Chappie Gardner, who had a part in the production and acted as one of the publicity representatives. Chappie was empowered to offer all sorts of inducements to get colored patrons out to take the best seats, but they withheld themselves and wrote mean letters. It is reported that Lee Shubert wired from New York that he didn't care, that Negroes could be segregated in his houses from now on.

DANCING ALL AROUND

KENT AND BERNICE

Who are tasting the fruits of hard work and application to their chosen profession. Since arriving overseas this talented American pair have played many of the biggest theaters and amusement places on the continent. In Paris they were kept at the Plantation cabaret for six months straight, while doubling other places. A few weeks ago, after a long run, they closed at the Moulin Rouge. At present they are in Berlin where they will open the Winter Garden (the international variety house). In the meantime, they are doing their fifth consecutive week at the exclusive Casanova. Their bookings take them to Budapest, Vienna and other famous art centers, with long engagements through South America to follow. They are domiciled at 55 Charlottenstrasse.

Theatrical -1929

Individual Troupes, etc.

UP "HARLEM" WAY

Negro Customs, Traits and Acting in Black-Belt Melodrama—An Idea Lost In Shuffling Entertainment

By J. BROOKS ATKINSON.

AT last we begin to see modern urban negro life through the eyes of a negro, and in what must approximate its true colors—from black to brown to high "yaller." One of the authors of "Harlem," William Jourdan Rapp, is white, but his collaborator, Wallace Thurman, is a negro, and all the actors save the white police sergeant are negroes from New York's densely populated Black Belt. As drama this black-bedizened festival is no great shakes, with its conventional yarn of murdering racketeers and high-caloried daughters of iniquity. But as an exhibition of negro acting in the frank terms of impersonation, as a medley of local customs and traits, it is deep-rooted, elemental playmaking. All the animalism springs so naturally from race that it loses, artistically, the offensiveness it would have in artificial circumstances. But it is animalism nevertheless, crude, dark and coarse, with none of the poetic exorcism of "In Abraham's Bosom" and "Porgy," and, for that matter, none of the bizarre pornography of "Lulu Belle."

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IN fact, "Lulu Belle," which was the product of white dramatists and white actors in the principal rôles, still remains for the Harlem negro a libel upon native life in that quarter. No doubt that was the sensational play Mr. Thurman had in mind in his recent novel entitled "The Blacker the Berry . . ." and no doubt the Arline who acted the most conspicuous part in it, and for whom the sable Emma Lou served as maid, was intended to be the vibrant Lenore Ulric. To Emma Lou the blistering fury of that spectacular drama was a never-failing source of amusement: "She wondered if there were any negroes of the type portrayed by Arline and her fellow-performers. Perhaps there were, since there were any number of minor parts being played by real negroes who acted much different from any negroes she had ever known or seen. It all seemed to her like a mad caricature. She watched for about the thirtieth time Arline acting the part of a negro cabaret entertainer, and also for about the thirtieth time came to the conclusion that Arline was being herself rather than the character she was supposed to be playing. From where she was standing in the wings she could see a small portion of the audience and she watched their reaction. Their interest seemed genuine. Arline did have pep and personality, and the alleged negro background was strident and kaleidoscopic, all of which no doubt made up for the inane plot and vulgar dialogue."

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NOT that "Harlem," even with Mr. Thurman as part author, need plume itself on the immaculate surface of its events, on the originality of its plot or the purity of its dialogue. However authentic it may be with its orgiastic "rent party" and its pungent vocabulary, the effect in the theatre is hardly exalted. And the rebellious Cordelia Williams, vile-tempered, hard and shameless, who leaps through the plot like a scarlet thread in a black cloak, is obviously Lulu Belle on the threshold of her fulgurating career. In this respect, as in others, you can hardly escape the observation that negro literature, when it is not unconsciously indigenous, follows the patterns of the day in its story and point of view. It merely wears its white with a difference.

Mr. Rapp and Mr. Thurman retort candidly that the Harlem negroes are in no respect more imitative of the whites than in crime. "In fact," they say, "Harlem is full of white racketeers working hand in glove with the blacks, and usually dominating them." Although "Harlem" begins with the miseries of a Southern family trying vainly to settle in New York, it soon creeps down into the underworld where melodrama finds life most congenial. For the time being the bootleg racket, with which we are thrice familiar, gives way to the "numbers" racket which is the gambling scourge of Harlem. This daily gamble, based upon the Clearing House statement, pays odds of 540 to 1. The chances of guessing the right number, however, are 1,000 to 1, and the profits to the "bankers" are accordingly huge enough to maintain an elaborate system of "runners" and agents and to precipitate all kinds of internal graft and corruption. As far as melodrama is concerned, the result is the usual murder in the second act and the usual arrest in the third. When Kid Vamp, king of the "numbers" racket, discovers that Roy Crowe has been double-crossing him, he shoots to kill.

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THAT much any hack writer might have plotted on paper; in the present state of things dramatic he would have plotted it automatically as soon as paper was produced, for, whether it reflects life truthfully or not, it is a shabby stencil in the theatre. But the authors of "Harlem" have managed to touch it up with the lurid high lights of local customs and figures—the common hatred of the Barbados negro, the color discrimination, the trade in stolen goods and in love charms, and the wild dissipation of a "rent party," with music, dancing, pigs' feet and corn liquor. Although two or three of the actors have skill and presence in the description of a rôle, most of them are merely impersonators of themselves. When the awkward business of story-telling is put to one side they settle down comfortably to the grateful task of being themselves the lack of self-consciousness in their acting is not so much skill as innocence about the stage. It is acting only in the technical sense of the term. They have been well selected for picturesqueness and variety never was there such a higgledy-piggledy array of types, nor such a range of voices, nor so much comedy in a shuffling style of walk. It is a heavy, lumbering spectacle with body, life and with something of rhythm. As negro melodrama, "Harlem" has a ring of authenticity that comes from the negro influence in its authorship.

But let us not confound a good show with discriminating artistry. Representing one aspect of Harlem is not representing the entire negro microcosm. You have only to read Mr. Thurman's novel to discover that this sort of animalism is as far beneath many negroes as the life in such melodramas as "Crime" would be beneath most whites. The nostalgia of the Southern family in "Harlem" is the germ of an illuminating dramatic idea, which is lost here in the black plague of a screeching entertainment Writing of the negroes for the stage, white authors frequently d[illegible] ideas without sacrificing character. O'Neill on miscegenation in "All God's Chillun Got Wings," Ransom Rideout on the same theme in "Goin' Home," produced last Autumn, and Paul Green on the tragedy of negro education in the Pulitzer play entitled "In Abraham's Bosom" mold their plastic material into the form of an idea.

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EVEN the primitiveness of the negro character which is exploited in "Harlem," has yielded beauty in the plays by white authors. You will recall the supernatural ecstasy of the voodoo séance in "Deep River" and the rich poetry of the spiritual scene in "Porgy." In a play entitled "Earth," better written than acted, Em Jo Basshe partly disclosed the dramatic possibilities in the fantastic religious superstitions of the negro. Negro themes have been coming into the theatre more and more during the past few years. In a country starved for folklore, the Southern negro, with his natural eloquence and with the purity of his spirituals, is an inexhaustible source of material. But the urbanized negro, for all his racial characteristics, represents something new. In due course he will be the subject not merely of workaday playmaking on a familiar but of earnest, thoughtful drama. Something of that sort—who knows?—may emanate from the Harlem Little Art Theatre, which is to be opened on Lenox Avenue within the next four or five weeks.

RACE DIRECTOR PAYS $89,000 TO 11,000 ACTORS

Interviews And Supplies All Colored Talent For Central Casting Bureau

Los Angeles, Cal., Mar. 6—ANP—Although it is almost impossible to induce Charles Butler, colored casting director for Central Casting Bureau to discuss or boast of his remarkable activities in the motion picture world, it was gleaned from him that checkup of his books shows that $89,000 has been paid into the hands of local colored citizens during the past year, through his employment of them as actors and extras in pictures. Over 11,000 engagements were issued by him in just the past nine months, 299 persons being placed during the week of February 10.

Mr. Butler is a high-salaried director of the Central Casting Bureau, whose duty is to interview and supply all colored talent, needed by the many large picture corporations here. Practically all the local actors now making good in pictures were "discovered" by Butler whose only stipulation is that they report on time. He enjoys the confidence of all the motion world higher ups.

LONDON HONORS ALBERTA HUNTER COLORED ARTIST

Chicago.—(ANP)—Alberta Hunter, intriguing "blues" singer, who got her start back in the old days in the Dreamland cabaret and later went to New York, has made a remarkable hit in England and on the continent, according to Nell Hunter, American soprano who is now studying abroad. Miss Hunter is better thought of than any colored American woman artist who has been in Europe since Florence Mills.

3-30-29

"Alberta has been on this side for nearly two years," writes Miss Hunter, "and has just closed out here (London) in 'Showboat,' in which she played opposite to Paul Robeson. She made a name for herself in London and has just left Paris to fill a month's engagement before sailing for the United States.

"There were any number of offers made to her to stay in London, but she was anxious to get home and only after refusing the Paris offer three times did she decide to take it even at the fabulous salary offered her.

"Socially, she is quite the vogue here, and has been highly entertained by Hon. Lady Cook and others of her standing. John Payne gave her a farewell party. His guests consisted of members from the casts of several leading shows, playwrights, movie stars, members of the nobility, and so forth. Not since Florence Mills has anyone been so well loved in London as Alberta. She has made and saved lots of money, too."

Sissle to Retire From the Stage

Famous Stage and Vitaphone Star to Devote Time to Promotion of Symphonic Orchestra

Noble Sissle, one of the creators and stars of the never to be forgotten "Shuffle Along," "Chocolate Dandies" and other pioneer Negro stage successes, who returned from Europe on the Berengaria on March 6, has thrown a bombshell into the amusement business by announcing that at the conclusion of his forthcoming engagement, which takes him back to Europe about the first of May, he will retire from active stage work.

In speaking of his just completed European tour, Mr. Sissle confided that it had been the most profitable and pleasant one in his career and that in the short space of 18 months he has become one of the biggest box office attractions in England and, incidentally, the highest paid single colored artist to ever appear in that country.

"It is an interesting cycle of events that prompts me to announce that I am retiring from the stage," says Mr. Sissle, in his usual serious manner. "I was engaged during the months of July and August last year to furnish and conduct a band at the Cafe Des Ambassadeurs, in Paris, and while playing this engagement I came in contact with a great many friends that I had made while associated with the late "Jim" Europe, who as you know, gave me my start in the amusement business.

"These comments were all encouraging and, after hearing my orchestra, which was one of the sensations of Paris, a great many of them asked me why it was that no Negro had come forward to take the place of "Jim" Europe as a leader, organizer and promoter of dance orchestras. Irene Castle McLaughlin, for instance, said to me one night: 'Noble, your band, with you conducting, reminds me of 1913 and the time when "Jim" Europe, Vernon Castle and myself first became famous. There has been no outstanding figure in the field of Negro music since Mr. Europe's tragic death and since Vernon Castle and I always considered "Jim" one of our partners in business, I feel privileged to confer this crown upon you.'

"That was a little more than I expected from the woman who is generally credited as being responsible for the present dance craze. As the season went on and my band became more and more popular. I thought of what she had said and, although I had to dismiss my band at the conclusion of the season at the Ambassadeurs in order to finish out certain contracts which I had to play in England. I continued to keep that thought in mind and now that I have just signed contracts with Mr. Edmund Sayag, the manager of the Cafe Des Ambassadeurs, for the coming season to again present my band, I have determined to definitely give up active stage work in favor of the orchestra business."

Mr. Sissle laments the fact that the Negro musicians, except in remote instances, are not holding their rightful place in the music business and have let the white musicians step in and assume the style of playing which the Negro originated and to corner most of the work that rightfully belongs to the Negro musician, by reason of his having created what is popularly known as "jazz music.' Mr. Sissle is hopeful, however, and feels that with proper organization the Negro musicians will again come into their own.

TRANSPLANTING HARLEM TO 42D ST.

THIS life, with its dizzy ascents and sudden descents, being whatever it is, perhaps it should be set down as no more than moderately strange that a young white man of twenty-four Summers and as many hard Winters, who once slept on park benches because producers refused to believe that he could act, is at the moment almost a minor god—the symbol, if not the actuality, of a sort of Broadway Abraham Lincoln—to sixty negro actors.

The reverence in which this thin and slightly pale young man—Chester Erskin is his name—is held is one of the unique sidelights on that new play about the vivid and color-splotched negro community uptown which has come to Broadway under the simple and comprehensive title of "Harlem." The deification of Erskin by the histrionic minded in the section centring about Lenox Avenue and 135th Street began in mid-November. Between that time and the first rehearsals early in January, most of Harlem knew what he was doing and just what actors were being picked. For most of Harlem was Mr. Erskin's casting office.

The young director began operations in a decidedly unprofessional way. Realizing that good negro dramatic players are rare, he started out with the fixed idea of lining up personalities rather than actors. In the tow of Ernest R. Whitman, a gentleman of power in Harlem, and Phil Armsted, a negro ex-policeman, he visited dives, speakeasies, rent parties, restaurants, cabarets and private homes. In his search for acting material, he paid no attention to past experience or theatrical record. If his prospects approached his types in appearance he made appointments with them for a reading of their parts. If they showed any flexibility at all he undertook to teach them how to act. About 75 per cent of the cast was thus trained by a man who could give Job a tussle in the patience marathon.

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It was not by searching among the completely inexperienced, however, that Erskin found his more exotic players, but by attending midnight rehearsals at the Lafayette Theatre. In the chorus of one of the Lafayette revues he discovered Isabell Washington. Like 'Delia, her misguided stage counterpart, Miss Washington had run away from home at the age of 16 to "do something big, to go on the stage and live high." She never got any further than the Lafayette until Mr. Erskin made her a dramatic actress.

Emory Richardson, too, is typical of the part he plays. He is what is known as a "race man," or negro who is striving for the betterment of conditions among his race. As in the play, he came North first, found decent employment and saved enough money to bring his family up from the South. He is the father of two children, and Erskin met him at one of the better-class negro homes.

The children who appear in the play he says he found in a Chinese restaurant at 3 A. M. They were being given their supper and kept ou until morning came and their bed were vacated by the boarders. Harlem of necessity sleeps in shifts and even the children sometimes mus crowd in their slumber before schoo hours and after.

Bud Allen, who plays the "Hot Stuff" Man, or seller of stolen goods would be typical of his stage counterpart, if Allen had not reformed Ernie Whitman is a Harlem politician and former racketeer, while Collington Hayes, who plays the shuffle-foot, Jenks, was lifted right off a Lenox Avenue corner.

When rehearsals got under way Erskin's chief problem was instructing his rough-and-ready cast in the rudiments of their new trade. His first move in that direction was to make his players repeat the lines after him, word for word, until they could recite them from memory. Then he permitted a few gestures and later he taught them the art of entrances and exits and how to ignore the audience. When they proved a bit slow in grasping things, their great lament was: "You know, Mis'to' Erskin, we'se colored people. We cain't think as fast as white folks!" When the play actually opened and they were praised for their individual performances they replied: "Misto' Erskin done it."

They at first insisted that he sit in the front row and watch them during every performance and often he still does. Whenever they are applauded they look in his direction for a nod of approval.

Democrat-Chronicle
ROCHESTER, N. Y.
FEB 14 1929

A Wreath for Freedom

In placing a wreath on the statue of Fred Douglass, the members of the "Porgy" company were not only honoring a great leader of their race but were giving a perhaps unintended testimonial to the progress his people have made since his time. If Douglass were alive today he might be moved to place a wreath on the members of this company who have brought to the theater one of the most thrilling expressions of spontaneous racial art that our stage has known. The wreath would be well bestowed.

The presence of the "Porgy" company in Rochester on the birthday of Douglass or at least on the day that is observed as that date, gave an extra note of interest to the anniversary. Douglass gave his life not only to the cause of freedom for the colored people but he wanted them free to express themselves in any way they might choose.

The characters of "Porgy" stand above everything else for the self expression of the race. They are not "educated" or intellectual Negroes in the white man's sense; they are not standardized under the white man's measure. They are characters that have developed according to their own racial perspective, the one completely natural, untamed type in a generally standardized age.

This freedom to express themselves, even in poverty and drabness and ignorance, may not represent much of an advance so far as acquisition of lands and wealth are concerned, but it does contain the seeds of a startling human drama that would have quickened the sensitive imagination of Douglass himself.

IN LONDON TOWN

RUSSEL AND VIVIAN

For the past three years have been sailing along the pleasant musical lanes of the British Isles. The clever pair weighed anchor on the high-seas leading away from Chicago and an eastern circuit to accept an attractive offer in London. They were an overnight success and their novelty dancing, singing and talking skit is booked indefinitely. Vivian was at one time a contributor to the theatrical page of the Chicago Defender.

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Troupes, etc.

ALL EUROPE RAVES OVER 'EM

THE THREE EDDIES

Who are a hit in London, Paris and Berlin. A nifty trio, always pleasing and who draw packed house wherever they appear. It is not enough to say that they are very good because that isn't putting it righ At the Ambassadeur cafe in Paris they were a riot. They do their stuff and know how.

New York Times 6-30-29 New York N.Y.

Margaret Simms, Who Sings a Song or Two in "Hot Chocolates," the New Negro Revue at the Hudson.

"Show Boat" for Road

NEW YORK—The New York principals of "Show Boat" will be seen in the roles that they created when this most famous of all Zeigfeld productions is taken on tour.

Jules Bledsoe of "Ole Man River" fame, the Jubilee singers and the colored dancing girls are to resume their places as in the original company that played for more than a year at the Zeigfeld Theatre on Broadway. Rehearsals have been called and "Show Boat" will open in Newark, N.J., the early part of September.

NEW SHOW OPENS

New York—"Hot Chocolates," the touched up edition of the review at Connie's Inn, in Harlem, with a book by Salem Tutt Whithey and J. Homer Tutt, and music and lyrics by Thomas Waller, Harry Brooks and Andy Razaf opened on Broadway Thursday night at the Hudson Theatre. Baby Cox and Minto Cato head the cast and Connie and George Immerman provided the bucks to get it going.

Josephine Baker Flops In South America

BUENOS AIRES, S.A.—Josephine Baker, the brown siren that stirred the entire European continent, is reported flopping in her engagement in South America.

The "Black Venus," as Josephine is called, arrived from Europe with her husband, a count, she says, and got reams of publicity from the press.

"La Prensa" called her show one of the "ridiculous contortions," while the other big paper, "La Nacion," went into raptures over what it called her art.

In spite of this boosting, Josephine has not proved the success anticipated. The optimistic impressario who is paying her 100,000 pesos (about $40,000) for her three months' tour, is not so happy.

NEGROES THEN AND NOW

(By Hannen Swaffer in the London Express.)

THE only innovation from abroad since 1919 has been the wholesale invasion of Negro turns.

When "The Rainbow" and "Dover Street to Dixie" were staged six years ago I protested against the trouble that might follow if so many colored people came here. In the next year Layton and Johnstone arrived with Elsie Janis, created the real sensation of her show, and started a boom which still continues.

In 1923 I was bitterly attacked by Negro newspapers in America because of my warning. So altered are things now that I received the other day from Romeo L. Dougherty, the sporting and dramatic editor of The Amsterdam News, a New York newspaper "published by and for Negroes," a long letter thanking me for my attempt to straighten out the difficulty in London.

"I have in my time received many letters from Negro performers in Europe," he stated, "voicing what they believed was your stand against them. However, I am fully aware that until the day when we, as a race, face certain facts without emotion and accept the truth, we will not be able to help in solving the Negro problem.

"Thanking you on behalf of more than 40,000 readers of our paper, the Negro performers and the Negro journalists, I remain . . . ."

Yes, "The Rainbow" caused trouble. So did some of the Negroes who followed. Paul Robeson and "Porgy" helped a lot to alter things.

Baker Picture Now Looms

Feverish Effort Now on After "Hallelujah" Success at Lafayette

JORDAN HANDLING MUSIC

Former "Shuffle Along" Chorus Girl Hopes "Siren of the Tropics" Will Hit Here

Ever since Clarence Muse and Stephin Fetchit came into prominence through their performance in "Hearts in Dixie," and lately the phenomenal overnight rise of Nina Mae McKinney in "Hallelujah," "talkiedom" has been looking with intense interest to the Harlem performers in hopes of finding someone with "IT" to portray the rapidly mounting scripts that await but the arrival of the proper character to depict the roles.

From across the sea comes an ominous rumble of thunder. The dark cloud of hope on the horizon is Josephine Baker—a little girl who, not so many years ago, was in the chorus in that unforgettable "Shuffle Along."

To the visitors of the theatre in Paris, Josephine Baker is best remembered as the "femme neir" of the Folies Bergere. It was with pleased surprise that her followers received the announcement of her entry into films. Their surprise was even greater when on the opening night an audience composed of royalty, resplendent with jewels and titles, settled themselves comfortably to witness the initial try of their "Jo" in "The Siren of the Tropics."

That Paris took to the picture was self-evident when after the performance they literally swamped her with congratulations and assured her that she had firmly carved a niche for herself in the Hall of Filmdom. She was the talk of Paris and had heaped even greater laurels upon herself.

Her sensational rise preceded the film to this country. Jack Goldberg, managing director of the Gold Pictures Corporation, hearing of the picture, took steps to have the film imported for showing throughout the United States. He secured the services of Joe Jordan and his orchestra of twenty-two pieces to synchronize the musical score. In addition he engaged a singing ensemble of twenty voices to furnish the vocal accompaniment.

Outstanding among the numerous musical selections that will be heard when the premiere is announced shortly is the theme songs "Josephine" and "Love for a Day." Porter Grainger, in association with Joe Jordan, wrote the lyrics and collaborated on the music.

Harlem and Broadway are awaiting this new entrant endeavoring to gain a foothold for her race and self in "talkiedom."

Banana Dance

Josephine Baker, Whose Picture, "The Siren of the Tropics," Will Be Shown Here Some Time in the Future, Is Shown in a Pose That Made 'Em Gasp in Europe.

The Music End

Joe Jordan Will Be Responsible for the Musical End of the Josephine Baker Picture Promised an Early Showing Here.

JULES BLEDSOE MAKES HIT AT THE PALACE

Shares Applause With Molly Picon—His "Volga Boatman" Delights Audience.

At least one newcomer on the bill at the Palace adds his talent to that of Molly Picon, held over for a second week after her Broadway debut, so that together they give moments of exceptional value and interest to the new program that opened on Saturday. Miss Picon is nominally and in fact still the brightest star there, and yesterday afternoon received a deserved ovation. The applause was approached only by that accorded to Jules Bledsoe, appearing at short notice on the bill by arrangement with his well-known employer, Mr. Ziegfeld.

After his singing of "The Volga Boatman" and two folk songs, the mellow strains of "Ol' Man River" threw Mr. Bledsoe's audience into such a mild hysteria of applause that he repeated its chorus twice with all the dramatic force that won plaudits in "Show Boat."

Making an almost complete change in program, Miss Picon is again alternately arch and poignant with the songs and character studies that she fetched up at last to Broadway from her Second Avenue Theatre. An easy and natural artist, she still manages to suggest that what she sings and says might be extemporaneous. She turns with an effortless charm from a series of impersonations of people at a wedding to a moving monologue of a street girl.

Occupying most of the bill before the intermission is Ruth Mix's Rodeo Revue. Miss Mix is the daughter of Tom Mix, the cowboy movie actor, and obviously takes naturally to a rodeo. A personable young woman addicted to wearing a ten-gallon hat, she rides her prize horse about the stage with skill. Thereafter, the Western atmosphere suggested by the title of the act is modified by a bevy of Gamy-Hale girls, who are something less than convincing as Indian maidens, and by other persons, including some harmonizers and a comic, Jed Dooley. There is, in fact, a little too much of Mr. Dooley, who is only intermittently amusing.

Two other acts return to the Palace in almost exactly the form in which they have been seen here before. Vanessi, billed as "the incomparable" and surrounded by the three "Lido Boys," presents a dance offering in which the dancing is restricted to pretty posturing amid plumes and similar finery; and the Mitchell and Durant skit, "Hold Out Your Hand," is still the same lusty piece of knockabout comedy. Ben Blue's song and dance medley and Gaynor's and Byron's novelty skating act concludes the show.

Jack Wilson and Company will be today's headliner at Loew's State

HERE ON VACATION

SUNSHINE SAMMY, vaudeville and motion picture star, who is spending his vacation here in Washington.

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Troupes, etc,

Latest Race Play Fails To Please The Blase Patrons of Broadway Shows

New York, —ANP—Another Negro play has reached Broadway, after much advance publicity, to meet the blittering criticsms of the rialto reviewers. The play is "Make Me Know It," by D. Frank Marcus, which was presented by Wallace Davis at Wallack's Theater Monday night of last week.

Reviewers in the New York Herald-Tribune and in the World like only the singing and dancing which is featured one small part of the production.

Howard Barnes wrote in the Herald-Tribune: "Make Me Know It" is a slip-shod melange of melodrama, musical comedy, and burlesque, in which Mr. Marcus, the author, sets forth many of the sins and a few of the virtues in what is roughly known as the Black Belt. There are many scenes, but few interludes of dramatic continuity; a wealth of situations with scarcely a moment of convincing dramatic suspense or excitement.

Called Hackneyed

"At best the current offering at Wallack's is a hackneyed copy of a typical Broadway underworld show, with only the complexion of the players to mark it as Negro."

After giving credit to A. B. Comathiere and Vivienne Baber for the good work they do in their parts, Barnes states that "only the jazz band in the stage box is permitted to rise completely above the exigenecies of a very poor play."

J. G., in the World, remarked: "A confused and jangling play of Negro life was preformed at Wallack's last night by a group of colored folk who made the evening a trying one by shouting and declaiming badly written lies. The play is imperfect in its craftmanship, and the authors, in staging it, has allowed his players to present comic strip caricatures, noisy exaggerated and unconvincing.

"For one brief episode the play took on life and color, rythem and movement. This was when the adopted daughter of the local political boss staged a birthday party. There was singing and dancing and the colored players, more at home in such scene than in those involving high-flung lines about love and honor and political ambitions, imbued it with vitality."

Such criticism is not what one would have expected from the advance notices. Before the Broadway opening, "Make Me Know It", was described as a play showing the better side of Negro life, one that did not hold him up to ridicule.

Want "Negro" Stuff

It may be that the author's attempt to offer his play some relief from the customary grotesque caricatures of the Negro which are accepted as the only certain genuine media for him before the footlights has been the cause of injecting new phases into the drama which surprise and disgust critics.

J. G. Notes that there is no pleasure for his ears in the lines on love and honor, coming from the lips of Negro players. He'd rather hear them sing and see them dance. Barnes, outside the jazz band, sees no more than a hackneyed reproduction of a Broadway underworld play.

Despite the thrusts of these critics, 'Make Me Know It may not be such a bad play after all. It may be that the reviewers and the public are not yet prepared to see the Negro in any medium that does not cast him in the old mold. He must either sing, dance, or be funny, or he must live a low-down life, rich in its suggestions of primitivity. He is not included in any cross section of American life.

"FARINA" SIGNS NEW CONTRACT

"Farina", Allen Clay Hoskins, of Hal Roach's "Our Gang" series of juvenile comedies, has renewed his contract with the producing firm, the terms of which are said to be more satisfactory in both money and length than any previously signed.

The little player is apearing in the "Gang's" latest release, Lazy Days, has been given the feature role according to Director Robert McGowan's policy of giving each of the six members a turn at being a star. "Farina" is probably the best known and most popular child actor on the screen.

FIRST PLAY ON BEST NEGRO LIFE COMES TO STAGE

New York, (ANP)—The first attempt, it is believed, that has ever been made to depict phases of life among the upper classes of colored people who inhabit sections of the typical modern American metropolis, is presented in the new play, "Make Me Know It," which ran up its first curtain for a tryout in the New Rochelle Theatre in New Rochelle, N. Y. recently.

Strong Stage Writing

The drama by D. Frank Marcus is a strong piece of stage writing and presented by an unusually strong cast headed by Vivienne Barber, late of "Harlem"; A. B. Comathiere, recently of "Porgie" and Harrington Guy, lately with the "Blackbirds" No. 2 company.

The only New York newspaper that makes a practice of reviewing out-of-town openings, the New York Telegram, reported through Aubrey Graves of its dramatic department, that "as it stands, "Make Me Know It" is the best all-colored show I've seen on the stage." The New Haven Times was equally laudatory.

Following the try-out week at New Rochelle and New Haven, Conn., the drama returned to the Central Opera House in this city, where it is again in rehearsal awaiting the assignment of a Broadway Theatre.

Mr. Marcus, a white dramatist and composer, well-known throughout Harlem, in a speech before the American Legion in New Haven, declared, "There has been too much of the 'Uncle Tom's Cabin,' and 'down on the levee,' stuff when authors have attempted to make a story or play of Negro life. The daily history of life in the colored districts of our great cities is compounded of the same general sorts of people, the same succession of petty and dramatic happenings, the same continuity of joys and sorrows, as one finds anywhere in the modern cities of the world—regardless of race, sect, nationality, or color. Some day authors and playwrights are suddenly going to discover this fact, and out of Negro life will come some really great American plays.

GARLAND ANDERSON SELLS HIS SECOND PLAY TO BELASCO

NEW YORK.—Garland Anderson, well known author of the stage play, 'Appearances," which has been produced on Broadway, has sold his second play, "Extortion," to David Belasco, which is equivalent to saying that he is well on the way to becoming a successful playwright.

Anderson's first play dealt with the struggles of a Race bellhop to succeed in the world in spite of many overwhelming obstacles, and was based on the events of his own life. He, himself a bellboy in a Frisco hotel, wrote his play between shifts.

Anderson told everyone he met of his burning ambition to have the play produced. A cousin of Al Jolson, who owned a cigar store in Frisco, heard of Anderson and his play. He wrote his famous cousin about him, and the latter sent Anderson his fare to New York and paid his expenses for three months. 11-2-29

Producers who read the play decided that it was good, but that it couldn't be produced because it required a mixed cast. It had never been done, nor had any Race playwright ever crashed Broadway.

So Anderson raised $15,000 and produced it himself. He went to people, showed them his play, and offered them an interest in it. They subscribed.

The day after the play producers were amazed to find that not a single newspaper reviewer had criticized the fact that there was a mixed cast. And that set a precedent on the American stage. Belasco immediately put "Lulu Bell" in rehearsal. From then on Race plays became popular.

Anderson's second play does not concern Race folk, but a third one which he is just completing does.

Anderson lives at 182 East Nicholas street in Harlem, and he has recently sent for his 14-year-old son in order to educate him in New York. "I'm going to see that that boy has an education," Anderson said. "I don't want him handicapped like I was."

Ethel Waters Picture Showing at Lafayette

Ethel Waters, best known of all colored singers and comediennes, will appear at the Lafayette Theatre this week (beginning Saturday, November 16), in her first talking, singing and dancing picture, "On With the Show." This picture has just finished a long run at the Winter Garden Theatre on Broadway and its presentation at the Lafayette Theatre is the first neighborhood showing. 11-13-29

"On With the Show" is really two shows in one. It pictures in scenes of unforgettable splendor the trials and tribulations of a big musical comedy show which is trying hard to reach Broadway after touring all the tank towns. This spectacular Vitaphone drama boasts of a very large cast of stage and screen stars, which includes Betty Compson, Louise Fazenda, Sally O'Neill, Sam Hardy, Arthur Lake, Otto Hoffman, Joe E. Brown and the famous Fairbanks Twins. The most capable and most important part of the cast, however, is Ethel Waters, the Four Covans and Angelus Babe.

Charlie Davis' newest musical revue, "Sidewalks of Harlem," will be presented together with "On With the Show." John Mason, Carter and Daly, Suggie and Red, Theresa Mason, Gallie de Gaston, Andrew Tribble and other popular performers are included in the cast of this fast and funny revue.

What Became of James Lowe, Movie Star?

Vienna, Austria, Nov. 15.—An Austrian radio and movie fan, Miss Olga M. Fetter, writes to the Defender that a few weeks ago she listened to a fine concert over the radio entitled, "An Evening With Negro Spirituals," and another evening, "Modern Negro Music," and last the presentation of John Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln."

"Artists like Roland Hayes and Paul Robeson are always welcome and successful here," she states. "The return of Uncle Tom, the beloved friend of our youth, was a real joy for us all and we felt the greatest admiration for the actors, especially James B. Lowe and little Mona Ray."

"Mr. Lowe got here such applause from one critic as only the greatest actors receive and we must meet him soon on the screen again. New Negro films are announced, but nowhere do we see his name. I cannot describe our disappointment, as we heard or saw nothing more from this famous man.

"Has the actor renounced the film and now plays only in the theater? We also think that this great actor hasn't been able to find a story to act in on the screen since he completed 'Uncle Tom.' You in America must do something to return this true actor back to the screen so we here in Austria may witness and enjoy his work."

Lafayettes Recognized by Producer

Evelyn Preer Stars in "Rain"

San Francisco, Calif., Sept. 18.—Manager Sidney A. Goldtree presented Evelyn Preer, perhaps the best known actress of the race, and an all-Colored cast in "Rain," the play that made Jeanne Engels, at the Capitol theater, Sept. 15.

The organization is the celebrated Lafayette Players, who have been together since 1915. They played for five years in New York, for three years in Chicago, and for the last year or more they have been acting in Los Angeles. Miss Preer played Ruby Lee with Lenore Ulric through the year's run of "Lulu Belle" at the Belasco theater, New York city. The star-acting Negro artists have caught the fancy of San Francisco theatergoers and will remain indefinitely

and will be seen in other drama items of their extensive repertoire.

The Lafayette Players were hailed as pioneers when they first appeared on the theatrical scene. They were all more or less exeperienced in legitimate drama, but were in the main individuals of intelligence and great ambition. Cleo Desmond, who played leading roles in the early days, and who is at present with the company, is an accomplished musician.

Andrew Bishop, a New Yorker, who carried honors as the hero, soon gained wide popularity as a matinee idol, both because of his handsome physique, winning popularity and stage finesse. He is the son of a prominent Episcopal minister. His latest succes was in "Harlem," a risque production which opened on Broadway last season, and after an adventurous run on the road, closed in Chicago in June by request of the local board of censors. In this play, Bishop was easily the star.

Among other actors who kept up the reputation of the new dramatic movement, was Clarence Muse, now a featured movie player, having won honors in a leading part in "Hearts in Dixie;" Walter Criner, a native Californian, who displayed remarkable versatility in his portrayals of many character parts; Charles Olden, Evelyn Ellis, Susie Sutton, now being featured in a Broadway production, now in "Porgy," and Evelyn Preer, who joined the group in Chicago, as her first serious stage venture. Since that time she has risen steadily in the estimation of recognized theater patrons.

'AMOS & ANDY' CREDIT NEGROES WITH SUCCESS

Thousands of Negroes throughout the land would like to know "who, what, when and the how come" of Amos and Andy, the radio hours each night from Coast to Coast, over the National Broadcasting company, and so the dramatic editor of The Call herewith presents a short sketch of the two:

FREEMAN GOSDEN (Amos), is 30 years old. He was born in Richmond, Va., in 1889. Hence Amos' natural southern accent. Three generations of Gosdens lived in Virginia and Freeman is said to be the first to leave the state. Gosden, according to reporters, was raised in true southern fashion with a Negro "mammy." Freeman's mother took a young Negro lad into her household who was reared along with Freeman. He was the inspiration for many of the "Amos and Andy" episodes, and the direct cause of their remarkable success on the radio.

CHARLES CORRELL, (Andy) unlike Gosden, was born in Peoria Ill., in 1890. He sold newspapers as a boy mingling with the boys of the streets, many of whom were Negro boys who formed fast friendship with the little newsie. He soon learned a lot of things from these colored lads which were to make his fortune in later years. The boy however, had from the beginning a natural flare for the show business. It was in Durham, N. C., many years later, that he met Gosden there and became interested in the team which was to make them famous, "Amos n' Andy."

It was in 1925 that the radio fever got to Gosden and Correll in earnest. WGN station, the Chicago Tribune, hired the couple to their harmony work together. It was not long, however, that the station manger suggested a try at a comedy dialogue act, and so was born, "Sam n' Henry." Soon after this the team decided to broaden their scope and so conceived the idea of making electrical transcriptions of their dialogues and syndicating them to various radio stations throughout the country. The broadcast feature of Sam n' Henry belonged exclusively to the Chicago Tribune. The new idea therefore necessitated a change in the title and a new contract. Soon "Amos n' Andy" were at it— and how the idea did work. Their popularity seemed to mount over night. As months and months passed and the popularity increased the National Broadcasting company began to take notice. They soon had the team signed to a long contract.

And so, "Amos n' Andy," after all, is but the results of contact of a white boy with a Negro lad, only the white boy had the foresight, ambition and vision to capitalize his vision and knowledge. And still it must be a bit of comfort to the colored boy to have been the inspiration of "Amos n' Andy."

FOOLISH NEGRO ACTORS

A WHITE playwright named Marcus has written a play about political intrigue in Harlem called "Make Me Know It." Another white man with the good, old American name of David Verschleiser, produced it. There were a large number of Negro actors in the cast and no whites. The company rehearsed for seven weeks with a week's tryout in the suburbs of New York City. Now, after three days on Broadway, the play has closed down for want of patronage, and the Negro actors have been thrown into the street without pay. The only money they got was for the week's tryout.

In referring to the closing of the play, the New York TIMES said: "Since the cast was composed of Negroes it was not protected by an Actors' Equity Bond." The inference is that Negro actors are not members of the Actors' Equity, the labor union of the theatrical world which is affiliated with the American Federation of Labor. The biggest and richest white actors belong to this union, but the bulk of Negro actors, poor and insignificant, cannot see the necessity of joining. There are a few Negro members of Actors' Equity, but very few. The rest are happy-go-lucky, apparently satisfied folk, depending wholly on luck and chance. Consequently they get many more bad breaks than their white thespian friends.

If organization is good for white actors and protects them from the whims and vagaries of producers and managers, then it ought to be even more desired by Negro actors. No group of actors in the world has been robbed and stranded oftener by irresponsible or unbusinesslike managers. Yet, the bulk of Negro actors will not join Actors' Equity nor organize a Negro union to protect their rights. Eventually, of course, they will learn but how costly will be the delay!

MADE BIG HIT

GEORGE D. WASHINGTON

Soloist of the Paramount Picture Theaters, who appeared last week at the Penn theater, this city. His performances were greeted with a remarkable degree of enthusiasm. Last Thursday he participated in a benefit performance given for soldiers at the U. S. Veterans' Hospital in Aspinwall. Prior to his appearance here, he was greeted with tremendous ovations at New York and Brooklyn Paramount theaters

Paul Robeson Engaged for "Othello" Role

First Race Actor to Do Shakespeare Lead

BULLETIN

London, England, Sept. 3.—Mr. and Mrs. Robert S. Abbott were the dinner guests of Mr. and Mrs. Paul Robeson at the latter's home. Later Mr. and Mrs. Abbott attended the Coliseum theater as the guests of George Dewey Washington, who is playing there.

London, England, Sept. 2.—Paul Robeson, leading actor of his Race, has been given the role of "Othello" in Shakespeare's play, to be seen this spring on stage and in film.

Maurice Browne, London producer of "Journey's End," signed the artist, who, since his graduation in 1922 from Rutgers college and Columbia Law school in America, has won honors in the various roles of barrister, singer, composer and actor. This assignment marks the first time a Colored actor has played a leading Shakespearean part in an all-white cast.

Mr. Browne, entirely unmoved by the furore his action seemed to cause when it first became known, agreed with the prediction that the artistic future of talented Colored actors seemed very bright.

The producer secured an option on Robeson's appearance in this country and in the film contract before sailing for New York. He did not discuss the matter of complications surrounding Robeson's suspension by the Actor's Equity association, resulting from a suit for breach of contract instituted last fall by Caroline Dudley Regan to prevent his appearing in the London production of "Show Boat." She held that he was signed to play in her New York show.

Since his initial appearance in New York in O'Neill's "All God's Chillun Got Wings" and "The Emperor Jones" soon after his graduation from college, Robeson played in "Black Boy" and then sailed for Europe, where he made a successful concert tour.

He is married and his wife and son, born last year, are with him.

Theatrical - 1929
Individual Troupes, etc.

DETOURING "HARLEM" TO TIMES SQUARE

By WILLIAM JOURDAN RAPP and WALLACE THURMAN.

ONE day, more than a year ago, two hopeful young authors turned over to a play broker six scenes of a dramatization of life in Harlem entitled "Black Mecca." Less than a week later the broker called them up and told them that Crosby Gaige and Al Lewis both wanted to buy their play, asking which one she should sell it to. The authors—that would be ourselves—answered "Both!" And so it was.

Mr. Lewis had charge of the active work of production, and within a month the play was in rehearsal under the title of "Black Belt." And a month later it was taken out of rehearsal and the cast dismissed. We innocently inquired "Why?" and Mr. Lewis replied: "You haven't a 'wow' in your third act, and naturally we can't go ahead until we find one."

Being a bit mystified, we inquired us to just what constituted a "wow," so that we could intelligently proceed in search of one. Mr. Lewis thereupon enlightened us as follows: 'It's a bit hard to explain, but I think I can best make you understand by giving you an example. Say a thief is running down the street and a cop is chasing him. The thief passes by a crowd listening to a stump speaker. He jumps up on the stump, pushes off the speaker and begins gesticulating and shouting as if he himself were running the meeting. As a result the cop run by and the thief escapes. That's a 'wow.'"

With this as an example, we tried to think of a "wow" that would fit into our third act, but somehow the muse seemed to have deserted us. But again Mr. Lewis came to the rescue. He went to see "Porgy" and returned enthusiastic about the "wow" funeral in that play, and suggested, inasmuch as "Porgy" had scooped "Black Belt" on the funeral, that the latter get its "wow" by inserting a christening in its third act. We thought this over and rejected it. Undaunted, Mr. Lewis came back with plans to "wow" the third act by putting it in a cabaret.

All this took many months and the time came around when Mr. Gaige's and Mr. Lewis's option expired. Mr. Lewis wished to renew, but feeling we never could "wow" that third act to his satisfaction, we decided to try and find another producer.

During the next weeks most of the producers on Broadway read the script and turned it down. A casting agent who had been identified with Mr. Lewis finally bought a month's option on the piece, and at the end of each succeeding week informed its palpitating authors that he was going to do the play with George Jessel, with Morley, Milliken, Throckmorton and Gribble; and with Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur. Conferences were actually held with the Messrs. Jessel, Hecht and MacArthur.

The authors of "The Front Page" proclaimed that the first act and the beginning of the second act of "Black Belt" were swell, but that it was all wrong to bring the third act back to the Williams tenement and end the play there. Rather, the play should show Cordelia Williams going on and on along her sinful career and finally ending up disastrously, say, in Paris.

We listened attentively to the Messrs. Hecht and MacArthur, but decided we didn't want to rewrite the latter's "Lulu Belle." So, the casting agent's option having expired, we took our script and again went forth looking for a producer.

By this time there weren't very many producers left. But we, realizing that Broadway grows producers almost as fast as the United States grows playwrights, hoped that a special one might bloom just for us.

A young actor, play reader, stage manager, vaudeville sketch writer, and occasional director by the name of Chester Erskin got hold of one of the original copyrighted copies of the play. (There were more than fifty copies of the various versions of the play which had been typed at an expense of nearly $200. Most of the different versions were the result of trying to "wow" that third act to Mr. Lewis's satisfaction.) Erskin liked the play and decided he wanted to do it. He interested a theatrical publicity man by the name of C. A. Leonard. Both of them interested young Edward A. Blatt, who wanted to become a producer and bought the option sight unseen. We settled back to await its expiration. Imagine our surprise when these three young men actually produced the play under the title "Harlem."

"Blackbirds" Celebrate One Year On Broadway

Lew Leslie's "Blackbirds," the fast stepping colored extravaganza celebrated a full year's run on Broadway at the Eltinge Theatre on Thursday evening, May 9. The revue opened at the Liberty Theatre on May 9, 1928, and has since been playing to capacity audiences, a record unparalleled in Negro musical shows in the Times Square sector.

The history of "Blackbirds" is unique. With the exception of two critics, the production was generally frowned upon by the press of New York. Mr. Leslie, however, had great faith in his show. He kept rehearsing the chorus girls at a terrific pace. He made changes in the running order of the show and introduced several new skits, meanwhile keeping the greater portion of the show intact. Because of the unfavorable notices, business was poor at the start. Friends urged Leslie to close the show and save himself money and worry. Leslie, more doggedly certain than ever that Broadway audiences would like "Blackbirds," kept on to prove his point.

The first four weeks were the most discouraging from a business standpoint ever faced by a producer. The tide turned in its fifth week. Business perked up and kept perking up until capacity was reached in the eleventh week of its run. It has kept to capacity ever since. But Leslie was not satisfied with this. He saw opportunities for improving the show and kept making changes. Early in its run he introduced Johnny Hudgins, celebrated pantomimist, in the cast. Only this spring he added Eddie Rector and staged a new choral operetta based on the song hit of the show, "I Can't Give You Anything But Love, Baby." Even now he is still busy with his chorus, arranging speedier and more novel steps.

The tremendous success of "Blackbirds" was evidenced as far back as last October when demands for bookings on the road became insistent. Leslie immediately organized a second company with Harriet Calloway as the star. The show opened in Boston and ran for three months, a record. It stayed an equally long time in Philadelphia, and is now playing one week stands in the East to big business. The company is scheduled to go to London and Paris in June for the summer.

Four outstanding Negro stars have been made by "Blackbirds." They are Adelaide Hall, Bill Robinson, Aida Ward and Tim Moore, none of whom was well known to Broadway until they appeared in Lew Leslie's show. Leslie also brought Dorothy Fields and Jimmy Mchugh, co-authors of the production, to the attention of Broadway. Their songs, "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," "Diga Diga Doo," "Doin' the New Low Down," "I Must Have That Man," and "Dixie" are sung and played in every part of the civilized world.

NEGRO QUINTET STIRS PALACE WITH ITS JAZZ

Little Negro Drummer's Antics a Hit—George Jessel and Lita Gray Chaplin in Excellent Bill.

Another considerably better than average collection of acts, turns and specialties has been assembled for the Palace this week. Particularly in its first part was yesterday afternoon's new show excellent vauleville.

These pre-intermission proceedings get under way with the appearance of Jack Hanley, an eccentric juggler, whose slight-of-hand accomplishments are of less interest than the clowning which accompanies them. Carl Randall, a somebody among the feather footed hoofing gentry of Times Square, then contributes several trick steps, including a number with a walking stick that is representative of his stye of dancing at its best. To say that he even compares favorably with James Barton, who follows him, is to compliment him highly. Randall is assisted by the personable Virginia Watson, a good but considerably less accomplished dancer.

The chief applause getters yesterday afternoon were probably the five negroes who constitute the Norman Thomas Quintette, and the beating of palms in their behalf was caused almost solely by the antics of a diminutive, good-natured Senagambian who was the drummer of the organization. His performance upon the varied set of instruments assigned to him was that of a jazz virtuoso so compelling were his humorous efforts to attract attention. He even made up for the nasal-voiced tenor who sang sentimental ballads and motion picture theme songs.

The spot before intermission was allotted yesterday to Mr. Barton. This week he tries a new version of the sketch about a man endeavoring to negotiate an entrance into a speakeasy. It is fairly funny now and will become funnier the more it is played. He also dances in his inimitable fashion and is, as always, a hit.

Another headliner this week is Lita Grey Chaplin, whose name has been in the newspapers before. Appearing in an over dressed stage setting, she made an impression at the first show by the simplicity and directness with which she delivered some of Tin Pan Alley's trite ballads. Just how favorable that impression was may be estimated from the circumstance that when she felt urged to sing "Sunny Boy" nothing was done about it.

She is followed by George Jessel, who, for all his youth, is an experienced professor of vaudeville. He knows what the Palace patrons want and he gives it to them—"fly," highly amusing comedy and saccharine sentimentality, in equal parts. He, too, is a deserved success by the time he makes way for the closing act of the Rubye Latham Trio.

Will Mahoney, Joe Browning, "The Undercurrent" and Benny Davis and entertainers have the leading positions in the new Riverside bill. Georgie Price will be the headliner at Loew's State, starting today.

ETHEL WATERS SINGS THEME SONG IN PHOTO

NEW YORK CITY (By Maurice Dancer)—For once again the valiant Warner Brothers have completely revolutionized the motion picture industry. As they first made the formerly dumb drama of screen articulate with Vitaphone, they have now endowed the once drab shadows of filmdom with the bright lights of the rainbow.

A short while ago when everybody thought that talking pictures were only a dream, these brothers proved different when they brought to the screen Al Jolson's "Jazz Singer." History repeats itself, and of course, it would be the Warners, who would add further laurels to their already crowded wreaths by bringing to the main stem this new and startling chapter.

Their latest masterpiece, "On With the Show," had its world premiere at the New York Winter Garden last Tuesday evening, an all-talking, singing anl dancing Vitaphone special, and to top this off, it is a 100 per cent natural

color production that rivals any of the Broadway musical extravaganzas, done with the artists in person.

This all-white cast is featuring Ethel Waters, America's foremost ebony commediene, whom Ashton Stevens says "is the finest artist of her race and generation." Ethel has added another star to her crown of musical achievements. As she has made herself liked on the stage by her wonderful ability in putting over her songs and that winning personality, she won her way into the hearts of the first nighters, who viewed this special with keen interest. The theme song, "Am I Blue?" is one of two numbers done by Miss Waters, and she more than takes her share of laurels.

"On With the Show" is an instant box-office attraction and looks as if it will have an indefinite stay on Broadway.

BLEDSOE WAS NERVOUS AT "SHOW-BOAT" REVUE

IN BOSTON—THEN DAZED, STAGGERING, AT BIG OVATION—SUPER-STAR OF ZIEGFIELD PLAY AT COLONIAL — GIVES GUARDIAN INTERVIEW —OPENED ROXY'S THEATRE IN N. Y.—RATED GREAT SINGER—SPENT FIRST HOURS HERE IN KING'S CHAPEL

Interviewed by L. L. Feurtado

It was in the grill room of the Parker House that I chatted with Jules Bledsoe. He was dining with Mr. Burgen, assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and Mr. Killingsworth, a member of Show Boat ensemble. I found him in a happy vein and well satisfied wit his reception in Boston. He has a wonderful personality and in deep, musical voice, he expresses himself modestly and with no trace of self-consciousness or conceit. Indeed, he is charming to talk with. His manner is so straightforward and unaffected.

He tells me that he and, indeed nearly all the Colored players, came to Boston with a sort of nervous uneasiness, for they had heard how critical is Boston and her theatregoers. To shake off some of this, he wandered about the city on the day of his arrival and took in some of the interesting points that go hand in hand with the proverbial culture of Boston. He entered Kings Chapel. Here he interested himself in tablets and reminders of Colonial days, he sat in a pew and meditated. He felt spiritual in this historical atmosphere, "and" he added, "I prayed."

Jules Bledsoe is a big man—tall and heavy with a kind, sympathetic face. When he spoke the last two words I was looking intently at him and an expression that was spiritual enveloped his countenance.

On the opening night his nervousness returned. but he went through with Old Man River with a power that had never seized him before. He forgot Boston, he forgot the audience and the thousand eyes fastened on his big frame. He could only see, he coud only feel, the mighty waters of the great river. And when he had finished the tremendous ovation he received was so great and so surprisingly unexpected, that he staggered a bit on the stage. Mr. Killingsworth interrupted at this point, to say that he had noticed it.

Mr. Bledsoe is of course very fond of this song. He says it is the text of it that moves him strongly, and he feels it within him as he sings. To him, this is no mere jazz song to be syncopated and poured out in light mimicry, and so in spite of efforts to have him produce it as an old-fashioned darkey piece, he cannot help the manner in which he interprets it. He has made it a concert piece—a real classic.

I first heard this man with a wonderful voice, sing in Jordan Hall back in 1925. I remember one of his numbers very distinctly. It was the Song of the Volga Boatmen and I thought I had never heard anything to move me sa and impress me greater.

He did not stay but a day or so in Boston at that time, so he is going to see all the things he has read about and heard about the city during his stay here now. And he is so centrally located, stopping at the Parker House, that he has a fine starting point on these ittle expeditions.

There are anumber of interesting events in the short acting career of Jules Bledsoe. I say short, because it was only in 196 that he emerged from the concert stage to do theatrical work.. Deep River, although short-lived on Broadway was the first musical play in which he staged a part. It had the first "mixed" singing cast on Broadway. Here he had a chance to appear in high class music—arias, operatics and even duets with a white soprano. But, as I say, this was destined to be short-lived, altho Mr. Bledsoe believes the production will come to life again. The public was perhaps not then prepared for the "mixing" but it is the only thing now that they want.

When Roxy Theatre opened in New York, he was the only soloist. He sang Swanee River. This theatre, (as you know, is the finest in the country. But he has also done something along dramatic lines. He created the role of Abraham, in "Abraham's Bosom," in 197, and took the part of Emperor Jones which yas shown in limited engagements in various cities.

And now he is with Ziegfeld's Show Boat—the biggest thing on the American stage today and on the Parsian stage at the same time. Here he is making good and has earned the reputation of being one of the stars in Show Boat—a most enviable one. I was speaking about the "mixing" of the ensemble and he tells me that among them is an Italian, and that Mr. Winninger has a Japanese valet, that two of the principals are Jewish, and of course, there are Colored. This I think, is quite interesting.

We wandered back in our chat to his concert days and he disclosed this fact; that in 1927 he yas soloist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in New York, with Mr. Kessouvitsky conducting, and sang the Creation. I am wondering if the presence of Mr. Burgen and the words dropped suggesticely, the Boston Symphony Orchestra have their eye on him for their soloist next fall.

We have a remarkable man and a high class artist among us in the person of Jules Bledsoe—a Texan by birth, but not to stay in Texas with the wonderful opportunities of the North beckoning him.

EVE. SUN
BALTIMORE, MD.
MAY 11 1929

"Porgy" Goes Down

Du Bose Heyward's "Porgy," according to a dispatch from London, has failed to capture the imagination of the English public and will be withdrawn after a six-weeks' run.

In spite of the success of the play in this country, its failure in London is perhaps not altogether surprising. Of course, the dialect of Catfish Row might have been expected to confuse an English audience, but this, after all, was merely a detail of the production in comparison with the psychology that lay beneath the action, the sense of rhythm that carried it along, the outbursts of weird religious ecstasies and the clever handling of mass effects. All of these features were seen and fully appreciated by the better critics, but they left the more popular critics puzzled as to what it was all about and the popular critics no doubt expressed the opinion of the general English public.

The truth of the matter is that the English already have a definite conception of what the Negro is based upon their familiarity with the old-fashioned minstrel show and its modern counterpart, the Negro revue. In "Porgy" they found something totally alien to this conception and they were not prepared for the sudden transformation. C. B. Cochran, who arranged for the Theater Guild production, states that, though he is disappointed, he has no regrets, which is an intelligent attitude to assume. For after all, a success in London such as that which attended the play in this country was a little too much to expect.

IN OLD MADRID

—Photo by J. Weltsman.

WILLIE LEWIS

Another one of the boys making good on foreign shores, but who longs for a word from the folks back home, is Willie Lewis, saxophonist with Sam Wooding's Chocolate Kiddies band. They are all the rage in Madrid, Spain, at the Florida night club, but will open in Barcelona for the entire month of June.

NEW YORK TIMES
MAY 9 1929

Colored Troupes in London.

Not so long ago mention of negroes performing at a London playhouse connoted minstrel entertainment. Clowning, playing the banjo, dancing and comic rolling of eyes was the accepted répertoire of colored actors. Then came negro jazz bands. Now London theatregoers are ready to turn out in full force to view a play with negro members in its cast, and to judge it impartially, or even with a favorable prejudice.

Their admiration and applause for PAUL ROBESON in "Show Boat" were generous and appreciative. For the opening of the London production of "Porgy" an audience of unusual distinction was assembled, and the play is repeating its American success. English appreciation of negro achievements has reached a point where the "cult of the coloured" has become fashionable.

But in the hearty welcome for the cast of "Porgy" there was discrimination against one member. The famous goat who pulls Porgy's small express wagon about the stage found it very difficult even to enter the country. As a foreign-born goat, he was barred. After consultations by committees of experts and patient arbitrations, he was finally offered sanctuary in the basement of His Majesty's Theatre. There he spends his days, coming out nights for his cross-stage runs.

NEWS
CHARLESTON, S. C.
MAY 1 1929

"Porgy" a London Success

DuBose Heyward's negro play, "Porgy", is announced a success in London. It should be a greater novelty there than it was in New York. Fewer negroes are resident in London, and a negro cast is more of an innovation there than it is in New York. "Porgy" is housed in a theater which has furnished a long list of popular productions.

Reports say tha notables are attending performances of "Porgy". At the premiere H. G. Wells and Noel Coward were in the audience. Both are quoted in glowing praise. Societ leaders have given it their stamp of approval by evidences of personal interest while they were spectators. The signs are that "Porgy" in Lond will bring Mr. Heyward a generous stream of pounds, shillings and pence.

"Porgy" originated in Charleston—mainly in Church street, they say. In printed form it drew opulent royalties for Mr. Heyward, and on the stage it drew even more. Its New York run lasted for several months; concurrent', traveling companies were playing to good business. Had it been produced in the years when the "road" was traveled by the best of them, Charleston and other towns in the Southeast would have housed it.

Transporting "Porgy" to a London theater was probably no greater an experiment than transporting of most of the plays with American endorsements. Either an attraction of this type would go flat in London or it would win notable attention. It appears that "Porgy" has won notable attention, that the English are going to support it during a long run. The features which earned particular approval in this country are also singled out in London.

Charleston to London for a negro character study is a far cry. To translate types of Charleston negroes and their ways of living to London is a daring and an ambitious enterprise. That "Porgy" should win in London is additional evidence that Mr. Heyward's is a work of high artistic appraisal. Naturally, among Charlestonians warm glow of pride in its distinguished author is revealed.

Theatrical - 1929

Individual Trainees pt.

COLORED DANCER FIGURES IN TRAGEDY IN PARIS HIGH LIFE

(By J. A. Rogers)

Paris.—The single colored dance hall here, and a colored woman, known only as Renee, have come into the limelight as the result of the latest tragedy in Parisian high life.

Madame Weiler, daughter of a wealthy Parisian merchant, shot and killed her husband, Robert, son of Gen. Weiler, early Sunday morning. Both had been to the colored dance hall, which is known as the Bal Blomet, where the dead man, taking a fancy to Renee, danced with her and invited her to accompany them on the visits they were about to make to cabarets.

What, if any, part Renee has played in fanning Madame Weiler's jealousy, for she complained that her husband had too many women, is not yet known. After making the rounds of several cabarets with M. Weiler and his wife, and a male friend of the Weilers, Renee was dropped at her home about 4 a. m. An hour and a half later, Mme. Weiler had killed him.

Mme. Weiler in her statement to the police said: "At the dance hall we met a colored woman, tall and well built. My husband invited her to come along with us.

"Then we went all four in search of a cabaret. We found one on the Boulevard Montparnasse, where we met many peoples from strange lands, and drank a lot of champagne.

"The colored woman caused a sensation in the place. My husband danced with her almost all the time, while I remained with our guest."

Questioned by the police Renee said: "I did not even know their names. We remained together until 4 a. m. They wished me to remain but I wanted to get back to my friend, and they took me home. I [illegible] about them, except that [illegible] borhood of the [illegible]le from that [illegible] noth-

edy might not have happened. "Unhappily," she says, "the place closed at midnight, and we had to go elsewhere."

This Negro dance-hall is in great favor as a place of resort by fashionable Parisians and white Americans. Clement Vautel, noted columnist, says of the incident: "Negroes are quite the fashion now. Sleepless nights, truly Parisian, are spent with the blacks."

This latest murder has caused quite a stir. Mme. Weiler, after sending two balls into her husband's body, forced her way into the bathroom, whither he had fled, and putting the revolver to his ear as he lay on the floor, fired again: "I hated to see him suffer," she said, "and so I put him out of agony."

* * *

Colored Entertainers Please

Paris.—"Frisco" (Jocelyn Bingham), one of the most popular of the Montmartre entertainers, has been enticed to Berlin by a contract at a fat figure. Frisco recently refused an offer to return to America at a large sum.

Zaidee Jackson, recently of London, is appearing nightly at the newly-opened "Plantation" in Montmartre. She is getting one of the largest salaries ever paid an entertainer here. Before leaving London she scored a great hit at a charity affair given by the Duchess of York.

J. Glover Compton, popular piano player of Zelli's, will return to the United States some time in January for a two months' visit, accompanied by Mrs. Compton. He has been abroad for three years, during which period he has played in most of the countries of Europe, and for several of the crowned heads. For six days he played with the Palm Beach Six at the O'Brien Villa at Biarritz, where the King of Spain, the Prince of Wales, and other members of royalty were entertained. He has just finished a special engagement with W. B. Leeds, multi-millionaire.

To see the genial J. Glover seated at the piano at Zelli's, his fingers tickling the keys, and his cigar tilted at the Uncle Joe Cannon angle, is an event in itself.

Mr. Compton hails from Chicago, where he holds, or held, the colored billiard championship, having beaten all comers at a tournament held at the Appamattox Club of that city. He also holds the championship of Switzerland. His home is 3641 Prairie Avenue, Chicago.

* * *

Josephine Baker Quits Berlin

Josephine Baker has forsaken Berlin for Paris. Several reasons have been given for her leaving the German capital. It is said among other things that her dancing failed to please at the Western Theatre, where she had signed for a long contract; again, it is said, that she quit when she demanded an additional salary of a thousand marks nightly ($250); while it was reported in several of the leading French papers that her sudden departuer was due to a quarrel she had with her alleged husband "Count" Pepite Albatini over money matters. The quarrel, it is said, turned in a fight between the two, during which Miss Baker's leg was injured, making her appearance impossible.

In an interview recently given to George London, one of the leading French journalists, and published in Le Journal, Miss Baker denies the last assertion. "That," she said, was done by the German nationalists, who do not like me. They do not like me, because in Berlin, I was considered as a Parisienne."

In this interview Miss Baker again denies the statement, of which she herself was the author, namely, that she is married to the "Count." She declares that it was a marriage only in name, and all a good joke; that he is only her manager.

"But," said the interviewer, "I thought he had become your husband?"

"Ah," laughed Josephine, "that was a good joke. My marriage with Pepito was one only in name. Very funny, isn't it? No, no, Pepeto is nothing to me, except a faithful maager. But I insist that I have not quarreled nor fought with him in Berlin, as was claimed."

Miss Baker, it is said, left the Western Theatre suddenly, throwing her things into a taxicab, and going home.

On her return to Paris one of her first acts was to visit the cell where Dr. Gaston Prieur is confined. Dr. Prieur, according to the French papers, was the one who financed and ran the cabaret, that was under her name in the Roue Fontaine. He is accused of swindling the insurance companies of large sums for many years by issuing false certificates to workmen.

"Poor Dr. Prieur," said Josephine, "to have seen him thus with the handcuffs on, certainly made me feel bad. Do not laugh. What an agreeable and charming man he was. Always very correct, and how marvellously he could dance.

"I could scarcely contain myself. As soon as I saw him I flung myself into his arms, and hugged him. Poor dear! I came pretty near hugging his lawyers, too. Attorney Pinganaud has such a fine beard, and Attorney Berthon such a gentle smile and Attorney About is such a nice boy. I hope that they will save him. They must for his patients! They must for the sake of his dancing. My manager, the Prince Pepito Abatino, was as much moved as I. He, too, hugged the doctor."

Miss Baker is to appear at a grand championship gala to be given here in the holiday season by some of the leading newspapers.

* * *

Quartette Awarded "Top Of The Bill"

Glasgow—The Four Harmony Kings—Messrs. Ivan Browning, W. H. Berry, Chas. E. Drayton and George H. Dosher, continue the winning of high appreciation in their tour of the United Kingdom. The Glasgow Herald, speaking of their appearance at the Pavilion here, says:

"Public appreciation awarded 'top of the bill' to an American quartette of artistic colored singers, the Four Harmony Kings.

"Confining themselves to the music which belongs peculiarly to their race, they sang plaintive plantation melodies, expressive and richly harmonized; jazz items, rendered with unerring rhythm and humor, and 'Go Down Moses,' a Negro spiritual.

"The last, which was perhaps the most enjoyable of all, was sung by the bass of the quartette in a rich well-controlled voice, and with the simplicity and sincerity which are the essential of the spiritual."

SURROUNDED BY STARS

BRING "APPEARANCES" TO CHICAGO—Photo shows the cast of "Appearances," the three-act drama by Garland Anderson, which is being presented at the Princess theater in Chicago. "Dodo" Green, only member of the cast who is not white, is in center of picture.
—Photo by Defender Staff Photographer.

Chicago Little Theatre Opens Program of Plays of Negro Life

Chicago, Ill.—Encouraged by the warm reception here of "Porgy" and "In Abraham's Bosom," which ran for several months in two of the large loop theatres, the Cube, a little theatre, Thursday evening opened its program of plays dealing with Negro life. The characters will be local amateurs. The program will run for two weeks.

An exhibition of paintings and sculpture by colored persons was opened at the Cube also last Thursday with a music recital in which George Garner, internationally known tenor, took part.

The little theatre located at 1538 East Fifty-seventh street in an old building used during the Chicago World's Fair, is managed by students of Chicago University and other youths interested in the movement. It was founded in February of last year by the students headed by Sterling North, winner of the 1926 "Poetry Magazine" prize, and John Matsoukas. Its patrons include educators and prominent civic and social leaders of both races.

One of the directors of the theatre is Miss Mary Hunter, who has had dramatic experience at eastern women's colleges and in Hollywood. The directors are assisted by Mrs. Carey B. Lewis, Albert Dunham, Chicago University Phi Beta Kappa key winner at the age of 22 years, and Barefield Gordon.

The plays to be given include "The Dreamy Kid" by Eugene O'Neill, "The No-Count Boy" and "The Man Who Died at 12 O'clock" by Paul Green, and "Plumes" by Georgia Douglass Johnson.

Paintings by Arthur Farrour, Chas. Dawson, William E. Scott and seven pieces of sculpture by H. Barthe, promising young artist, are on exhibition in addition to ten photographs by William Gannoway, amateur photographer. Among his photographs is "The Spirit of Transportation," which won the national photography prize in 1921.

SIGN ETHEL WATERS FOR TALKING FILMS

NEW YORK, (Special) — To keep in the lead with their Vitaphone specials, Warner Brothers recently signed Ethel Waters, America's foremost ebony comedienne and musical comedy star.

Miss Waters' first picture will be "Broadway or Bust." It is the story of a Broadway producer who brings out a show on a shoestring. There will be scenes from musical comedy and some other features that have made "Broadway Melody" such a hit and is directed by Alan Crosland and surrounded with a cast including Sally O'Neil, Carlotta King, Arthur Lake, Betty Compson and the Fairbanks Twins.

Ethel Waters has made an enviable reputation as a Columbia recording artist, star of "Miss Calico" and "Africana" and a $2,700 a week headliner on the Keith Circuit.

Keith Star to Appear With Sally O'Neil and Betty Compson in Picture

LOS ANGELES (Dancers News Bureau)—To keep in the lead with their Vitaphone specials, Warner Brothers recently signed with Ethel Waters, America's foremost ebony comedienne and musical comedy star, to do the trick.

When Warner Brothers started the craze for talking pictures, they searched the world for the best talent and drawing cards available. They finally induced Al Jolson to make "The Jazz Singer" on the Vitaphone, which proved such a tremendous success that they repeated with "The Singing Fool." Then Fannie Brice was contracted to make "My Man."

"Broadway or Bust"

Miss Waters' first picture will be "Broadway or Bust." It is the story of a Broadway producer who brings out a show on a shoestring. There will be scenes from musical comedy and some other features that have made "Broadway Melody" such a hit and is directed by Alan Grosland and surrounded with a cast including Sally O'Neill, Carlotta King, Arthur Lake, Betty Compson, and the Fairbanks twins.

Was Keith Star

Ethel Waters, who we all know or have heard of, has made an enviable reputation as a Columbia recording artist, star of "Miss Calico," and "Africana,' 'and a $2,700 week headliner on the Keith circuit.

It is firmly believed that Ethel Waters' rendition of "Dinah," "Go Back Where You Stayed Last Night," 'You Can't Do What My Last Man Did," "Handy Man," and her personality will do as much toward keeping Warner Brothers' Vitaphone production in the lead as Al Jolson's "Mammy," and "Sonny Boy" and Fannie Brice's "My Man."

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NEGRO PLAY CANCELED BY CAROLINA SOCIETY

Protests Filed Say Organization Is Not for Uplift of Race, 150 of Whom Were in Cast

Special Despatch to The World

COLUMBIA, S. C., Feb. 6.—Protests that the Columbia Stage Society was organized to foster dramatic art and not to uplift the Negro race to-day caused the cancellation of further rehearsals for "Potees Gal," a play by Dr. E. C. L. Adams of this city, in which a cast of 150 Negroes were to have appeared.

The play, written with a view of production in New York, was submitted about two months ago to the Columbia Stage Society, many members of which declared themselves as willing to sponsor it as an interesting experiment in the South.

Other members, however, after rehearsals got under way, took another view and began protesting, supported by a number of the society's patrons. The drive against the play came to a crisis with the publication of a letter to-day in the State, Columbia's morning paper, which was responsible in great part for the Stage Society nine years ago.

"Potees Gal" is taken from a story, "Big Charleston," one of the "Congaree Sketches," by Dr. Adams. The first act deals with a Negro dancer at a "hot supper," at which one participant is killed. The second depicts the funeral oration for "the corpse," which, to the surprise of many, is said to be quite reverent. And the third act portrays the sprouting of a romance for "Potees gal" during the fu[illegible]al.